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v. Stein

A WAR MINISTER AND HIS WORK

REMINISCENCES OF 1914-1918

BY

GENERAL VON STEIN

LATE QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL
AND WAR MINISTER (1916-1918)

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A WAR MINISTER AND HIS WORK

CHAPTER I

HOMELESS

WHEN the world war broke out I closed my house in Deutsch-Eylan, and consigned my possessions to God's care. I went away to the war and, at first, my daughters went to stay with relations and acquaintances. When Deutsch-Eylan seemed threatened by the Russians my belongings were packed up by strangers, and sent to Berlin to be stored. My daughters went to join the nursing staff of the Army of the East, and my son fought against the Russians, while I was busily engaged with the French and English. We found ourselves without a home of any sort, but service to our Kaiser and country was sufficient compensation for everything.

When I was appointed Minister of War in the autumn of 1916, I found at first that the War Office only afforded restricted quarters, as the officials'

residence was still in occupation. However, one room for my office, and an adjacent one, was all I required. When my daughters returned from Russia to take over my housekeeping they had to make shift in the same way until the official residence was vacated, and its luxurious rooms were ready for us. This official residence was very fine in many respects, but with its unfamiliar appointments, it never seemed to me really homely. I put a few of my things into some of the rooms, just to feel that from time to time I could be alone among surroundings with which the memories of a lifetime were associated. But the greater part of my belongings had to remain in store. How much has been lost or destroyed that was once laboriously collected and carefully preserved and looked after !

When I was a child I was once plunged into deep grief, when another boy said to my brother and me : " You have no home ; when your father dies you will have to clear out." Of course we did not know we were living in an official residence. Besides, even places like these can be a real home, if one can stay in them undisturbed until the children go out into the world.

I like to think of the old, cramped and unpretentious parsonage in which I spent my childhood, and often found my haven of refuge even after I had grown up. Those who spend their lives going from one furnished house to another are even worse off ;

they become mere nomads. All the same, I have lost all feeling for it.

In the autumn of 1918, when I was removed from my position as Minister of War, I failed to find a house in Berlin or its suburbs although I tried every possible means. The obstacle to removal to a distance was the difficult railway situation. But many others were in the same boat. Every day the papers displayed advertisements in which hundreds of marks were offered for information about houses to let. In these circumstances further search held out no prospects of success, and as the official residence had to be vacated, there was nothing for it but to put our household goods back into the store where, for the matter of that, the bulk of our belongings had been all the time. I should have actually found myself without a roof over my head if I had not been allowed to use a few empty rooms in the War Office.

My uncomfortable and harrowing stay there was prolonged by the misfortune to all our servants, who fell victims to the ravages of influenza. We were not going to leave faithful followers in the lurch. Whenever I entered or left the house I was under observation from the Soldiers' Councils or the sentries who shared their political sympathies, so that I might almost as well have been in prison. The manner of the sentries was often most provocative, and they clearly regarded themselves as masters.

How many homeless folk had the same experience at the time and how many others have still to face it ! I am thinking first and foremost of our warriors who have already returned or will shortly do so. For years they have been living in a strange land, often without a roof over their heads, and death hovering round them all the time. Where will they find a home of their own now ? All kinds of difficulties as regards housing were encountered after the short and victorious war with France. This time the whole matter was to be taken in hand in good time ; the deplorable conclusion of the war and the confusion at home put an end to the preparations.

A great many people are under the impression that there *must* be plenty of houses available because so many thousands have never come back. That is a fallacy. The widows and their children are left behind ; many new families have been founded, and the masses pour into the centres of attraction—the great towns. The result is that the shortage of houses is not felt uniformly all over the country, but it is certainly the greatest at those points where its consequences are the most serious.

If I remember rightly, the bread-winner of a family was, and probably still is, threatened with the workhouse if he does not provide his family with a roof. Often enough even decent people have found themselves with no other last resort than the poor-house. Reuter, in his poem " Kein Husung,"

gives an affecting and distressing picture of the way in which quite a modest fortune is dissipated when a home is lacking.

We are thus faced with a crisis, the solution of which must be the task of the State and all private citizens. If we are ever to become a stable State once more this will be one of the means by which our recovery will be facilitated. The impulse in that direction is already alive and active. It will become more effective when men have not only a roof over their heads but at any rate a small piece of land to link them up with Nature and the productive forces of the earth.

What man in a large town has ever stopped to ask himself from what source the necessities of his daily life are supplied? The baker delivers the bread, vegetables pour out from the greengrocer's, milk makes its appearance from the milk-cart. Thought travels no further back than that. The needs of the times have broadened our outlook.

The first result of that process is that antagonism has sprung up between town and country, an antagonism which has to be cured before enlightenment can do its blessed work. The soldier living daily in the trenches has learned to watch the growth of the plants, a phenomenon he has never observed before. He has taken to growing flowers and cultivating vegetables on a small scale. He must never lose the benefit of those experiences. The

existing difficulties of our food situation—difficulties which will remain for a long time yet—compel us to co-operate in the production of even the simplest and most essential necessaries of life.

I was anxious to leave Berlin. The dumb witnesses of the great past of Prussia and Germany, with their silent lamentations and accusations, struck me to the heart. Only one pleasure was left to me—the entry of the first troops. Many a man among those well-tried warriors shed bitter tears. He who had drawn his sword with the enthusiasm of a good conscience, he who had held himself ready to die for the greatness and honour of his Fatherland, might well weep over the shame and disgrace, over faithlessness and betrayal. But at any rate the Prussian and German colours once more fluttered in the breeze. Were they now to speak of the past or should they now point to a new future ?

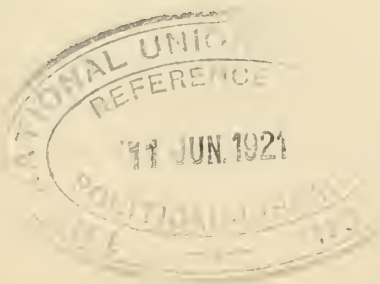
They alone could make the parting painful. The same could not be said of the great mass of the people who filled the streets. Many among them seemed to be quite unconscious of the difficulties and shame of the times. They were laughing and fooling about. " Fieldgreys " were offering their belongings for sale to hawkers. Some of them were selling newspapers and pamphlets. What a world of self-mockery and self-accusation was in their tones as they cried out the merits of a certain book, " William the Last " ! Berlin had become a thoroughly demoralised city.

I must away! At the station we took a short but extremely moving farewell of our own people. My orderlies had been with me throughout the whole period of the war. That is a link which lasts through life. They had stood by my side in bad times as in good, and for that reason I shall always count them among my friends.

Luck was with us, for we not only found room in the train (which was full to overflowing), but even friendly fellow-travellers. Our destination was the Harz, at the foot of which I was born. The old home received the homeless ones once more. We found shelter in the market town of Braunlage, right under the Brocken.

There, in the cheerful and hospitable house of Herr Dumling, are these lines written. I have brought with me no books, no notes or other aids for my work. Everything I write about my thoughts and experiences is from memory. For that reason much may seem to have little relation to space or time. One's point of view is affected by the nearness of events and a one-sided knowledge of the context.

Yet for all that it may not be without a certain value to draw directly on my memory.



CHAPTER II

PERSONALITIES

EXPERTS and other people may argue until the end of time about the relative importance of personality and mass movements in the making of history. I, for my part, shall never cease to believe that it is individuals who exercise the greatest influence in the affairs of this world, and who are alone able to determine the directions that events ultimately take. All that is happening to-day only confirms me in this belief; for, while on the one hand I behold the masses bent only upon the work of destruction, on the other I have everywhere heard the cry and clamour of the multitude for a *man*.

Thus, in these pages, the reader will find that certain men are made to stand out who, though they may not have stamped their age with their personality to the same extent as Bismarck did, have yet been able to wield enough directive power in their own particular department, in order to influence to no small extent the course of the war. I do not propose to relate the history of their lives in this volume; but simply to consider and call attention to those aspects of their work which happen to come

under my notice either through my personal contact with themselves or their activities. If at times I should appear to concern myself also with the purely human side of their natures, this will be only with the object of bringing them more to the readers as fellow-men, and of avoiding the common error of presenting mere mortals in immortal guise.

Field-Marshal Count von Moltke

An old officer who had been through the campaign of 1870-71 said to me at the beginning of the year 1915, " If old Moltke had been among us, we should have been victorious long ago, and the war would have been at an end." These words demonstrate the amazing and unbounded confidence which this great whilom chief of the German General Staff once enjoyed. But I must not be surprised that he inspired this confidence from the start—not by any means—even after he had shown himself successful. I have had quite intelligent people assure me that there were other generals of whom they thought even more highly than of him. It was not uncommon on such occasions to hear the name of Blumenthal mentioned.

But at the present day there is no one who would venture to doubt the supreme greatness of the Field-Marshal. But how is it, we may ask, that this greatness has been brought home to the meanest

intelligence? Only through the persuasive powers of success. If only Hindenburg and Ludendorff had been able to remain successful until the end, they too would now have been elevated to the skies by a jubilant and wildly enthusiastic multitude. As it is, however, every fatuous coxcomb now thinks himself justified in pronouncing his foolish criticism against them.

It was Moltke who once said that success only attends the able man. But not every able man has had success, nor is he likely to have it in the future, and this despite the fact that a general no less great than Moltke has said: "Let all careers be open to men of ability." [1] For have not a number of leaders of men—from Hannibal to Napoleon himself—been wrecked in the end, and perished under a cloud? Even the most powerful of great men may be hampered by the smallness of those about them. Thus the words that old officer said to me, which I have quoted above, should not be too readily regarded as true. The circumstances of the Great European War cannot be compared with those of the war with France. It should be borne in mind that behind Moltke in those days there stood that simple, well-balanced and strong-minded man, Kaiser Wilhelm, not to mention the towering genius of Bismarck, The French Army, moreover, had then not quite

[1] Napoleon Bonaparte: "*La carrière ouverte aux talents.*"

recovered from the wars in the Crimea and Italy. let alone the adventure in America. We, on the other hand, possessed a magnificent army, flushed with the triumph of two campaigns, and superior at least in numbers to that of the enemy.

Now I am not of those who swear by the belief that God is always on the side of the big battalions, or of superior numbers. Often enough have we seen that the converse is true, without having to refer to Leuthen [1] or any other hostile engagement of the past. Be this as it may, there is truth in the old adage. A Commander-in-Chief to-day cannot create the strongest battalions at a moment's notice ; they have to be mustered and held in readiness for him in peace-time. But what a number of people have to have their say before that can be done ! Occasionally of course, he can by his skill make good the deficiency by concentrating massed forces at a particular decisive point, and content himself with the weaker forces in other quarters. But there are limits even to this form of strategy.

During the whole of the past war we were numerically inferior to the enemy. Nevertheless we carried the day on more than one occasion, and also succeeded in preventing not a few enemy's successes. At the beginning the enemy on the

[1] A village in Prussian Siberia where on Dec. 5th, 1757, Frederick the Great with 34,000 men beat the Austrians, who numbered 90,000.

decisive front usually brought his superiority to bear only on small sectors of the line at a time. And in those days, of course, it was possible for us to confront him with forces as strong as his own, because the rest of our front was not engaged. Later on, however, he attacked on ever-increasing fronts, until at last he realised that he could only make his numerical superiority felt, by attacking along the whole length of the front at once. His wealth in war material and the help of America enabled him to accomplish this. Albeit he was never able to achieve his principal object, which was to paralyse the fighting powers of our armies by his attacks.

The laws regulating the conduct of war are as old as the hills and as simple as they are old. It is, however, not always a simple matter to observe them. Despite the fact that they are valid for all time and never change, they are frequently forgotten and lost sight of. They might in certain circumstances degenerate into a game, as they did in the days of Condottieri, when each side endeavoured, by means of skilful chess moves and with least possible loss of blood, to checkmate its adversary. The first wild ruffian, however, who chose to disregard these subtle rules and to wield his sword with deadly effect destroyed these illusions at one blow.

All the great Commanders-in-Chief have always laid stress upon the old and time-honoured rules of

war. Clausewitz developed them in his book on war,[1] and bequeathed them as an inheritance to the Prussian Army. Moltke plainly recognised those same rules both in his theory and his practice. The rout of the enemy is achieved by an enveloping movement, and in its most perfect form by means of a complete encirclement of his forces, for which Tannenberg will always stand as the pattern.

We came across a similar case under Moltke's own leadership only once, and that was at Sedan. The enveloping movement at Worth and St. Privat ultimately determined the victory. At Worth, however, it succeeded only after very heavy fighting, and cannot be regarded as a perfect example of the method, while at St. Privat it was not systematically achieved under the directions of the Commander-in-Chief and his staff, but was brought about by the spirit and resolution shown by certain subordinate commanders. Thus it is by no means an easy matter to observe these very simple rules. Many people are now of the opinion that since the last great war, these old rules have been superseded. But where our methods failed in this war was in those engagements in which the ultimate issue of the battle depended upon the unity of our operations. It would first have to be proved that this had been a necessity.

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[1] Vom Kriege.

In a certain not very well-known essay Napoleon draws a comparison between what he calls a *général du terre* and a *général du mer*. The latter surveys the whole of his battle area, as also the movements of the enemy ; from the former however, both battle-area and enemy are more or less concealed. He therefore requires to be endowed with a peculiar gift, which Napoleon calls divination—that is to say, something which partakes of the supernatural. Moltke substitutes for this gift the duty of a general to take for granted that the enemy are capable of adopting wise and effective measures, and to arrange his plan of battle accordingly.

But even this in itself is no small undertaking. In order to carry it out, a man must be possessed of a clear and quite impartial mind, so as not to fall into the error of suspecting the enemy of what appears to be his rational course, but which is, in sooth, but the creation of one's own wishes in the matter.

I only came across old Field-Marshal Moltke once, and that was when I was working as a lieutenant on the General Staff, and he took leave of us in August, 1888. His final words of farewell were distributed to the whole staff in the form of a printed letter. But even after that he continued to concern himself with the training of officers, and took an active part in the great final examinations at which they qualified for Staff appointments. The principles he laid down for the training of staff officers remained

operative until the time of the last great war. In regard to his general-staff rides, however, and his experimental practice in tactics and the direction of operations, others have written better and more fully than I could possibly pretend to do. From very small beginnings they gradually developed into the elaborate system with which we were familiar at the outbreak of the war.

Though at first they were only designed to apply to mixed bodies of troops and divisions, they were ultimately modified to meet the demands of work with Army Corps and Armies. But the sound and solid basis which he laid down was adopted without alteration by those who followed in his footsteps. The same remarks apply to the work of studying foreign armies, fortifications and works, reconnoitring, the history of war, and the measures to be taken for the various mobilisation schemes.

As chief of the Operations branch, I became acquainted with the preparatory measures by Moltke for the war of 1870, and it strikes me that it is a very remarkable thing how frequently great military commanders who all their lives have advocated aggressive tactics, in their old age incline to methods of defence. Even Clausewitz recommends them as the better policy. After 1871, Moltke, too, based his calculations upon this principle.

Neither of these great men, however, can be said to have recommended lifeless and inactive defence

alone ; both of them insist upon the advisability of taking the offensive once the enemy's attack has been met and repulsed. Observation of this rule is by no means an easy matter. For instance, in the light of what the last great war has taught, I cannot think of a single engagement where an offensive on a great scale was developed directly out of a purely defensive position. There may be all sorts of reasons for preferring defensive tactics. For example, they may be the best policy at a time when one is confronting the enemy, either with weaker forces, or with troops of inferior quality ; the dread of the heavy losses incurred in an offensive may also influence one in favour of purely defensive tactics. Moltke had other reasons for preferring them. The Army was to concentrate in Lorraine and wait for the French to attack.

The reason of this is not far to seek. We had no plans of conquest and had achieved all we wished to achieve. The object was to hold what we had won, whereas the French wished to recover what they had lost. That is why Moltke adopted the defensive, and with it the choice of position. Should the enemy advance through Luxembourg and Belgium, in the directions of the Lower Rhine, we were to wheel to the right, cross the Moselle, and attack the enemy in his flank. The defensive tactics were, therefore, not an end in themselves, and were part and parcel of a scheme of offense. Moltke did not

work out his plans on the basis of peaceful possibilities ; he always dealt with realities. Until the moment he came into contact with the enemy, he wished to maintain the initiative. Everything beyond that point he regarded as uncertain and unreliable.

On the other hand, he who would win a victory must not recoil from the task of attempting at least to penetrate this veil of uncertainty. And for this, decision and the power to carry it through are necessary, both of which factors are insufficiently appreciated either by the average civilian or by many a critic. In order to realise the whole difficulty of this undertaking a man must have found himself face to face with it in the midst of war. It will be quite wrong to suppose that any good can come out of plunging blindly into the depths of uncertainty. Before attempting to penetrate it, one must first have formed a tolerably clear idea of what the enemy may reasonably be expected to do, so as to shape one's course accordingly.

But this is not such an easy matter as the simplicity of the rules of warfare might lead us to suppose. The conditions in war change much too quickly, and they are too complicated for this to be so. Details about the spirit, strength, style and disposition of the enemy, and all intelligence received about him, may, however, be either supplemented or increased, or altogether confirmed by certain special

ruses of one's own. For instance, it is said of Goeben, that being anxious on one occasion to know a little more about his enemy, Faidherbe, and having captured both his horse and his soldier groom, he sent both of these back to the French general together with a courteous letter. On the receipt of Faidherbe's reply, which was contained in a long epistle, Goeben exclaimed, after perusing the letter, "Now I know my man!"

In most cases, however, one gets to know the enemy only in battle, and that is why, on the occasion of the first encounter, we should always very much over-estimate him. Thus it is clear that there are a variety of doctrines within the limits of the laws of warfare, though it may not be possible to provide a rule for every possible contingency. Their particular application must depend upon the creative spirit of the military commander.

As far as Moltke was concerned, his colleagues were convinced that he would always find a solution for every conceivable situation.

With all his powers of decision, however, Count Moltke was by no means a fighter by nature. He himself confessed to many a weakness, which he ascribed to the circumstances of his youth and his upbringing. Nevertheless he was known to have made his views, which were recognised as correct, prevail even against Bismarck. For even in those days there were differences of opinion, as between the political

leaders on the one hand, and the military authorities on the other.

It is impossible to draw so sharp a line of demarcation between these two spheres of control, as to prevent them overlapping. On one occasion, when he was holding a conference with the Supreme Command, Count Hertling attempted to establish a clear division between the two departments. He argued on the principle that the Commander-in-Chief was sufficiently covered, if his views of a particular situation were not acceptable, either to the political leaders or to the Kaiser, and that in that case he would have no need to resign his position. The political leader himself, however, would have to resign, if the Kaiser's decision went against him.

But the problem is not capable of being solved along these simple lines. After the fighting round Metz, for instance, Bismarck was of opinion that the German forces might bide their time and merely hold the ground while awaiting further developments. But Moltke rejected this view, because had he adopted it he would have been deprived of the chance of attaining a swift and assured decision. The political and the military departments must always arrive at some sort of compromise when their direction does not lie, as it did in the case of Frederick the Great, in the hands of one man. Under the rule of the old Kaiser Wilhelm, the friction between the political and military authorities never

gave rise to any very serious trouble. But the men of those days were greater in their generation than we are to-day. They knew how to subordinate all individual and other interests to the one great object, which was—victory.

Moltke always had the deepest respect for the views of the old Kaiser. When, if ever there was a difference of opinion between them, he always endeavoured to find an alternative intermediate solution, which satisfied both parties. I mention this because his successor, Count Schlieffen, resembled him in that respect.

There is a famous story, according to which Bismarck, Roon and Moltke once found themselves in company after their lifework had been completed. One of them, either Bismarck or Roon, put the following question : " What is there left for us to do in life ? " Moltke immediately came out with the answer : " Plant a tree ! " As far as it was possible to judge, the proposed tree could not possibly be expected ever to afford him either shade or fruit. He must therefore have been thinking of those who were to come after him.

That is the plain and obvious duty before us to-day when we see the German oak rent in pieces. We may set our hands to the work of reconstruction but we shall not enjoy its fruits. The future alone will profit by it ; and for that reason it is high time that we should put an end to the work of

self-destruction which is going on in our own house.

Field-Marshal Count Waldersee

Count Waldersee was Chief of Staff for a short time only, from 1888 to 1891. As far as my official duties were concerned I only came across him occasionally, at conferences on tactical questions. At a later stage I had to devote a good deal of my time to his plan of the concentration and strategic deployment.

The existence of the French barrier fortresses on the western frontier of that country might be taken as indicative of the intentions of the French to stand on the defensive. On the other hand, they could equally well serve the purpose of covering the French concentration, at the end of which they would be in a position to pass to the offensive. As we were expecting that we should have to deal with the French and Russians together, we had to look at matters from another angle. It was quite possible that from the shelter of their frontier fortresses the French might wait until the Russians had completed their concentration—a much slower business—and then break out in a simultaneous offensive with them. Things must never be allowed to get to that stage.

Accordingly Count Waldersee evolved further

plans for initiating an offensive. The whole problem was to discover some method of breaking the line of frontier fortresses with the greatest possible speed. For that purpose the heavy artillery of the field army came into being, though a comparatively long period of preparation and development was to be involved before it bore, and deserved to bear, that description. Heavy guns were to follow on the heels of the army in readiness to destroy the fortresses.

For the work of creating the heavy artillery Count Waldersee found the right man in Captain Deines, who subsequently became General of Artillery von Deines. He is the true father of this new arm, and it can truly be said that he devoted his whole life to its creation. I have worked under him and seen something of what he accomplished. By bringing this weapon into existence he smoothed the path of the foot-artillery and showed it the way to a new and important development. The late war has given the most glorious proof of its effectiveness, though General von Deines was destined not to live to see it.

The first experiments were made with only a few batteries, which had hired drivers and horses, and the development of the new arm did not reach its full height until the days of Count Waldersee's successor. As a matter of fact, the problem of attacking the frontier fortresses was never put to the test at that time. There is no doubt that it would have been a

very audacious enterprise to make a direct attack on a hostile army which was covered by fortresses which provided it with bases and powerful *points d'appui.* Count Waldersee was not the man to shrink from a bold plan. A man of the greatest energy and clear-sightedness, he knew no fear of man or anything else.

The plans of strategic deployment of those days seem now to be simple ; perhaps in some respects sketchy. They were all that the resources of the troops destined to carry them into execution could effect. They allowed sufficient room for manœuvring, as the Corps were to be concentrated adjacent to and behind each other. That is, they were echelonned in depth. At a later period this plan was insufficient to meet requirements.

Count Waldersee devoted as much attention and zeal to the training of the officers as his great predecessor had done. The old Moltke is said to have been delighted at times with the tactical exercises he set. It was one of these very exercises that cost him his post. The Kaiser had done him the honour of being present. In the course of a discussion that arose Waldersee expressed very strong views with which the Kaiser did not agree. Moltke would probably have found means of composing the difficulty, but in this case the gulf was not to be bridged. Accordingly Waldersee retired from his post as Chief-of-Staff. Subsequent events have

shown that in spite of this *contretemps* he enjoyed the affection and respect of the Emperor later on.

Shortly before a decision was to be taken as to who was to be promoted to the General Staff, he once remarked to us lieutenants, in his open, almost rude way : " Now you can just save your aunts the trouble of coming round to badger me on your behalf. I don't pay the slightest attention to them." It is the fact that many people believed that influence could be brought to bear by " aunts." Unfortunately jealousy plays a part in every walk of life, especially when it comes to competition for the more highly-prized posts. There is a natural tendency among human beings to be their own witnesses to their qualifications.

But there are many positions for which the possession of learning cannot be the dominant consideration. Personality is frequently a more important matter. However that may be, the appointments to the General Staff have proved that a mistake was certainly a rare occurrence, and such mistakes are in any case very easily corrected. I may be allowed, perhaps, to express an opinion on this matter all the more freely because at that time I never found myself among the successful candidates. When I recall the friends among my circle who were selected at that time I can only admit that the right men were chosen. All of them have played the most distinguished parts in the war. And as far as I

personally am concerned, it certainly never did me the slightest harm to have had a further spell of regimental duty before I was promoted to the General Staff, as I was later on.

Count Waldersee always took a very keen personal interest in politics and was frequently concerned with political affairs; but he never allowed it to play the slightest part in the course of training prescribed for officers. The army was to have nothing whatever to do with politics. That was a very proper attitude, but of course that does not mean that the officer is not to be allowed to form his own opinions. It is more necessary at the present time than ever before that he should do so.

The German nation is unpolitical and is likely to remain so for a long time to come. Its horizon is limited by the trivialities of petty party politics. The strong national impulse, which is so conspicuous with the French and English in spite of their lesser average degree of education, is lacking with us. Of course it is perfectly true that learning is by no means always a basis for political judgment, but ignorance is obviously still less so, and moral immaturity or lack of experience of life least of all. On these grounds I was personally very displeased at the efforts made to interest the younger recruits in questions of politics. All that happened was that a mass impulse took the place of independent and mature judgment.

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If the average citizen's measure of political knowledge and judgment was sufficient for the great bulk of the officers, those holding certain special positions required rather more. In the course of the late war very many of my officers found themselves faced with problems which touched both home and foreign politics and demanded keen insight, ripe judgment and endless tact. I need only mention the negotiations with neutrals and our enemies over the question of prisoners of war.

But they are equally necessary if the officer is to understand and properly support his superior in the execution of his military plans.

It is certainly doubtful whether anything approaching a real education in politics is possible, apart from the artificial notions and catchwords of party politics. Moltke founded a school, whereas Bismarck did not. It is quite certain that this is a sphere in which, far more than in any other, he alone will make good who carries the secret of successful action within himself and does not need to draw it from outside sources. Men like this are not made. We only recognise them when we see them.

Count Waldersee chose Count Schlieffen to co-operate with him in his work. Evil tongues have spread it abroad that he selected this man, who was renowned for his amazing capacity for work, in order that he should take the burden off himself. Of course, he was intended to relieve Count Moltke's

burden in many respects. There is nothing more crippling to a leader in a position of great responsibility than the multitude of small daily affairs which make demands on his time to the exclusion of more important matters. Ludendorff found it a very heavy burden that he had to take in hand so much ordinary work. As Hindenburg's assistant, he felt it his duty to take on this work though the whole complex of duties of both men had reached giant proportions.

Field-Marshal Count von Schlieffen

During the long period from 1891 to 1906 in which Count von Schlieffen held the position of Chief of the General Staff, I served for many years under him in different posts. For that reason I came into close relations with him and acquired a very accurate knowledge of the man and his methods. He continued along the lines of his predecessor's work, although his own always bore the stamp of his personality and originality. It was through him that the General Staff attained its fullest development.

It was an elementary principle with him that the General Staff ought to work in silence, and above all keep absolutely in the background. He certainly observed that principle with regard to his own person. It will be very difficult ever to find again a

man who worked harder or possessed a greater capacity for work. As far as his own personal requirements were concerned, he was often able to do without sleep altogether and satisfy Nature with a few hours' rest. On some occasions he spent the whole night working in his office until he was driven out by the charwomen in the morning.

I unhesitatingly pronounce Count von Schlieffen the possessor of the acutest intellect I have met in my life. He was very sparing of his words and his expression seldom betrayed the course of his thoughts. One of his adjutants called him the Sphinx, on the ground that no one ever knew what was going on behind his forehead.

One of his characteristics was a tendency to cynicism, the result of his immense knowledge of the world, and on this ground a good many people stood in mortal terror of him. This trait was the source of a good many stories which have gone the rounds.

One of his senior officers, a man of whom he had an unusually high opinion but did not exactly like, on account of certain uncommon peculiarities, asked him one morning in the course of a staff ride how he had slept. " I'd have slept a good deal better if I hadn't had to read through your work before I went to bed," was the answer.

On another occasion he had given an officer an interview, and listened to what he had to say in silence. After the officer had left the room it

occurred to him that he had made a mistake in a very important point. He immediately went back into the room, excused himself, and acknowledged that he had made a mistake. Count Schlieffen merely replied : " I didn't believe you in any case."

He would often listen to what a man had to say during an interview without once changing his expression and without saying a word in reply. It was therefore impossible to see whether what was being said was new to him or not. But he always knew everything that was going on and could ask some very awkward questions, particularly as he was a past master of the art of cross-examination. Many a great man felt uncomfortable in his presence. One quartermaster-general used to take every possible precaution to avoid being left alone with him for a minute. Another very experienced man of the world, who has taken part in many an adventure, once confessed to me that he was never able to remain in the presence of the Count without losing his presence of mind.

I have personally never been able to understand all this. With Schlieffen one need not hesitate to say anything and to put forward one's views with full vigour. He always showed a warm heart in personal matters ; there was no aspect of human life of which he had not had experience. It is certainly true, however, that he would make great demands on a man, and regarded most men as lazy because

he measured them by the standard of his own energy.

It is said that in his youth Count Schlieffen was a very gay officer. One event in his life exercised a restraining influence upon him long after it occurred —the early death of his wife. She died in Strasburg while he was stationed there as an officer of the General Staff. There was a rumour that he never again entered the town where she died. That is a myth. I have myself been to Strasburg in his company.

In his quiet way he did a great deal of good and was the means of relieving a great deal of distress. He could not bear, however, to be brought into public notice and talked about. On one occasion a regiment was being inspected which he had once commanded. One of the officers who was conducting the inspection indulged in the most flattering remarks about the regiment in his presence, and concluded with the words: "The achievements of the regiment remind one of the glorious days when Count Schlieffen was in command." To this the Count muttered half aloud to himself, "What a futile remark!"

To the General Staff rides, the number of which he increased considerably, Count Schlieffen added the tours of fortress inspection for the General Staff and practice rides for the Supply Service. The study of military history was developed to a degree that had

never before been reached in the history of the army. He himself, in spite of great demands on his time made by his official duties, found time to do a large amount of literary work. To read his books is a pure joy. They set out the great doctrines of war with admirable completeness. It is true that historical accuracy is strained here and there in order to make his teaching stand out with greater sharpness.

He was himself aware of this defect, and once expressed to me how much he regretted that he had never had sufficient time to make an even closer study of history. An amusing mistake once arose in connection with the most important of his works, "Cannæ." A somewhat brusque divisional commander who was not in the habit of wasting many words, once walked into the officers' mess of an Uhlan regiment after an inspection. The colonel of the regiment came forward to receive him and was asked abruptly and without any preliminaries: "Have you Cannæ?" The colonel whispered in the adjutant's ear and both went away, to reappear shortly afterwards followed by an orderly bearing a bottle of Pontet Canet.

I once told this anecdote to old Schlieffen after his retirement, when he had invited to his house, as he was fond of doing, some of his old brother officers. He laughed very heartily at it and said: "Yes, the Uhlans have always preferred drinking to study." His words were not intended to be taken seriously,

for he himself had been in the Uhlans, and he wore his Uhlan uniform to the last.

In setting the final test exercises in which every candidate for promotion to the General Staff had to qualify at the end of his regimental command, the Count would take care that they should be taken from reality. He would either choose a war situation that in view of the political atmosphere of the time was possible or probable, or he would choose an actual example from history. It was also his custom to devise exercises of this kind to illustrate and explain his views and with a view to inviting others to bring forward their opinions.

One particular example that always proved most instructive to the critic, and produced valuable results from the point of view of military criticism, was the working out, at his orders, of Bazaine's situation during his retreat through Metz to the bank of the Meuse. To what adverse criticism this unlucky commander has given rise by his handling of the situation! Now this same problem was set before numbers of able men. As it turned out, not one of them could produce a better solution to the problem than that on which Bazaine actually acted.

The War Academy was the object of special care on the part of Count Schlieffen. In the old, more peaceful days large numbers of young officers tried to qualify for this academy, both with a view to extending their knowledge of their profession and at

the same time to enjoy the life of the capital. When they had finished their course they went contentedly back to their regiments.

During the strenuous days of the war, when every one did his best to win promotion, things were altered. There was a great rush of candidates for admission to the War Academy in order to qualify for appointment to the General Staff. The number of officers who sought admission amounted to many hundreds, whereas it was only possible to admit a little over a hundred. This gave rise to a great deal of disappointment and bad feeling, and the authorities were accused of not selecting the candidates on their merits. I was for many years in command of the War Academy, and I am able to assert, without reserve, that the selection of the candidates was made strictly according to the results of the entrance examination. The large number of tests that were set made it an easy matter to pick out the best and the worst. The placing of the rest, those of average capacity, offered the examiner a hard problem. It was found very difficult to discover a really satisfactory cut-and-dried system of arranging the order of merit.

We have tested the most varied methods and tried to take into consideration the personal circumstances of the candidates. Thus, among a number of candidates of equal merit the first consideration would be given to officers whose age excluded them

from presenting themselves for examination again, or those who lived in small and uncongenial stations, or who had little or no private means. All attempts that were made by influential persons, even including princes and princesses, to obtain special treatment for their protégés, were disregarded without exception. In the course of the long years during which I was connected with the War Academy I can only remember one exception to this rule. On one occasion the Emperor gave orders that the son of one of his oldest officials, with whom he was on very intimate terms, should be admitted. With this one exception even he refrained from bringing his influence to bear. All the same, I am convinced that the doubt that has been cast upon the justice with which the selections were made still exists and will continue to do so as long as we have to deal with human beings.

The Count devoted himself with the greatest care to the preparations for the war. The extraordinary increase in the size of the active army, to which had been added many units of the second and third lines, made mobilisation no longer the simple matter it used to be. In preparation for an enveloping movement the mobilisation would have to be more lateral. The utmost use would have to be made of the line-of-march area and the transport roads. If France was the enemy a frontal attack offered no hope of success. Verdun, the forts of the Meuse, the

system of forts at Toul, Nancy, Epinal and the Moselle forts offered too formidable an obstacle. A flanking movement to the left was made difficult owing to Epinal, the Moselle forts, the Vosges and Belfort. A flanking movement through Belgium offered fewer difficulties provided that Liège could be reduced without too much delay.

Schlieffen devoted a great deal of thought to this plan of operations and drew up many others which did not involve going through Belgium. With these, however, he was not satisfied. Up to the last he held the belief that in the case of a war with France the enemy would make their first advance in Lorraine. In this he proved to be right. In this case a flanking movement through Belgium would strike at their most vulnerable spot.

The protection of the frontiers and the railways had been worked out down to the minutest detail. The most careful attention was devoted to the fortresses, guns, accoutrements and all innovations and inventions. Count Schlieffen was well informed in all departments of military knowledge, and lost no time in mastering the details of anything new that might crop up. He even took a good deal of trouble to go into the question of the very doubtful aeroplane that was invented by Ganswindt.

Under Schlieffen the heavy artillery of the active army underwent a course of training, which brought it to a high standard of efficiency and made it a

very formidable arm. I once took part in one of the manœuvres of this arm, which brought out very distinctly the influence of the Count's training. A stretch of country was selected in Westphalia which offered special difficulties for artillery work, as the deeply-cut sandy roads and the marshy nature of the ground made the transport of heavy weights very difficult. The heavy artillery, at that time served by hired horses and drivers, had to move to their appointed positions by a long march through this unfavourable country. To the spectator the picture presented was one of real war conditions: gun-carriages with their wheels embedded in the mud, overturned wagons, cursing drivers, and gun-crews struggling with the wheels. There were a good many officers present who doubted whether it would be possible to carry through the manœuvre. But behind it all there was a determined will, and on the following morning the guns were in their appointed positions and ready to open fire. In the pow-wow that followed Count Schlieffen pointed out that in the time of Frederic the Great none of the roads were any better than those that they had had to use that day, and that his heavy artillery were no lighter in weight than that of our own time; nevertheless he used to take them with him into the field. Schlieffen succeeded in doing the same thing. The heavy artillery became a field-arm in his time, and such it has remained ever since.

The influence of the Chief of the General Staff also made itself felt on the periodical testing of the army's readiness for war, for he was responsible for drawing up and carrying through the great Kaiser manœuvres. As the size of the army increased, these manœuvres were conceived on a continually increasing scale. In spite of everything, however, they could never really represent active service conditions. Questions of expense and consideration for the land on which the manœuvres were conducted limited their scope. What the manœuvres were unable to provide was supplied by elaborate war games played on maps.

In these exercises the Count followed a custom which has often been attacked and which is certainly open to criticism. By careful working out beforehand he was able to make the result so sure that when the Supreme War Lord assumed the command of one side that side was always sure to win. When it is remembered that in peace manœuvres, which are intended to represent a series of consecutive operations, it is always necessary to decide beforehand which side is going to be successful, so that the operations may follow the course laid down, it will be seen that this was more excusable than might otherwise have been the case. In peace manœuvres it doesn't matter in the slightest which side wins or loses.

Apart from this there are various other reasons

why it is impossible to come to an entirely satisfactory decision as to the result, for many of the conditions that are vital in real war are absent, and can only be considered in the most arbitrary fashion, —for instance, the bravery of the troops. A much more important point is that every leader and every unit, in whatever situation they may find themselves, either rightly or wrongly, should form intelligent decisions and act on them. It is often the case that a retreat gives a man the best opportunity of showing that he knows his business.

I have often discussed these matters with Schlieffen, and was at no pains to conceal from him my scruples. He used to say: "There may be some doubt as to whether it is right that the Supreme War Lord should command personally in the field, but there can be no doubt that if he does command he must win." As there were spectators of all kinds at the grand manœuvres, including the representatives of foreign powers, it certainly seemed a suitable occasion for risking, as it were, the reputation of the Supreme War Lord. Nevertheless, many will not share this view, least of all the commander of the other side, who feels that his own reputation is injured. The Emperor was too intelligent to allow this for a moment, and always showed himself most gracious towards his vanquished opponent.

Count Schlieffen was not by nature a fighter, and in this he bore a resemblance to old Moltke. Like

the latter, he always tried to find a peaceful middle course when he found himself up against the determined opposition of his master. This was very much in evidence at the time when the Upper Rhine was to be fortified. The Emperor supported the point of view that was held by his grandfather, that it is absolutely essential that South Germany should be fortified against the possibility of an enemy invasion. He was therefore anxious to build an extensive system of strong fortresses. Schlieffen was of the opinion that in case of war South Germany would have to bear her share of the burden in the same way as any other German territory. Accordingly he wanted to build simple fortresses that would make the least possible demands on the strength and resources of the army. He made a tour of the Upper Rhine accompanied by a number of officers and set them to work out various problems, the solution of which would throw light on the question. During this time he was not very approachable, which with him was a sign that he was deeply engrossed in the work in hand. But he found out what he wanted and was able to deal with the question in a way that satisfied the Emperor's wishes.

The older the Count grew the harder he worked. It almost appeared as if he were afraid that he might not live long enough to get through all the work he had set himself to do and which he regarded

as of vital importance. It is possible, too, in view of the general European situation, he may have thought it likely that he himself might be called on to direct operations under war conditions. When in 1906 he retired from the service, his farewell speech gave expression to his deep regret that his age had imposed this limit on his career. When I, like many of his old brother officers, took my leave in private, I was able to realise how hard it was for him not to be able to devote himself any longer to the service of his King and Emperor.

His life was a life of hard work, and for that reason alone an admirable one. There were only two powers to which he acknowledged subjection: his King and Emperor on earth, and his God in heaven.

General von Moltke

A Saxon, but not as clear-sighted as Saxons usually are, once wrote me an uncharitable letter about Moltke. He began by quoting the well-known words imputed to the Emperor when he was receiving the new Chief of the General Staff: "You can look after what peace work there is; in war I am my own Chief of the General Staff" (*das bisschen Friedensarbeit machen sie im Kriege bin ich mein eigener Generalstabschef*). He added that Moltke might perhaps have made a General commanding

a district. This Saxon did not know Moltke, which makes it possible to forgive his stupid letter. If Moltke could have heard what this man had to say about him he would have been greatly amused. He never said anything to me about these words, which rumour has put into the mouth of the Emperor. I am always very suspicious of such stories as this. One never knows in what context or in what tone such words may have been spoken. However this may be, it is certain that the Emperor did not act on them.

On the other hand, I happen to know that when Moltke took over his new post he told his War Lord that it was his intention in all matters to lay his views frankly before him. He kept faithfully to this promise, and by doing so won for himself a position of great influence with his sovereign. For one thing, it was he who persuaded the Emperor to abandon his practice of assuming the command of one side at the general manœuvres. His views on this subject did not coincide with those of Count Schlieffen.

When Moltke was Quartermaster-General I served under him as Divisional Chief; when he was appointed Chief of the General Staff I became Assistant Quartermaster-General, and finally I took the field as his Quartermaster-General. It will be seen, therefore, that I am in a better position to know him than his superficial critics.

He had never prepared himself for this position of responsibility, and indeed had never had any idea that it would fall to his lot. For a long time, however, he had been adjutant, and the companion of his great uncle, and in this way had received a training that can only be acquired in constant association with an important man. Just as he had hitherto proved himself an excellent commanding officer, who had with a clear eye and acute understanding of the interests of the men of his command, so now he assumed with his natural adaptability and great gifts the totally different type of work in the same way as his predecessors. He possessed a calm, mature judgment, worked with great energy, and showed himself pleasant and friendly to every one. It would have been impossible to find oneself associated with a pleasanter companion than he. He made no distinctions of person and was free from prejudices. When the war broke out he had for the second time in succession to interrupt a cure at Carlsbad, which must have been a severe strain on his health. He did not allow anything to appear on the surface.

In the training of the General Staff and officers he did not depart from the methods that had been tested by his predecessors. His lectures on military problems were models of clearness. His breadth of view is testified to by the fact that he was the first to give orders that aeroplanes should be armed and

should take part in the fighting; before that they had only been used for purposes of observation. He did not come much before the public eye, the reason being, apart from his natural reserve and unselfishness, that he had to follow an outstanding personality. He could only take over what his predecessor had left to him. As he knew the work to be right and complete he had little to alter and little to add, as perhaps a smaller man might have done. Quiet and modest as he always was, he never talked about what he had done and never looked for any acknowledgment. He was quite unmoved by malevolent criticism and would retail it without any embarrassment, for he was possessed of a very keen sense of humour.

The leaning towards the metaphysical, which has distinguished other members of the Moltke family, was from time to time noticeable, but he did not allow it in any way to influence his judgment. This was doubtless an heirloom from the northern home of his ancestors and is not by any means unusual among us Low Germans. He was capable of suffering severe moral pain, for he had a very sensitive and sympathetic heart. The sight of the faces of the wounded has been known to draw tears into his eyes. He often expressed a wish that he could join in the actual fighting as it had been his good fortune to do as a young man in the war of 1870-71.

When the first unfavourable news was brought

to him from Liège, he said to the Emperor, in his frank, straightforward fashion: "Now you see what you have done; you have brought the English down on my head for no reason." He never forgot these words and often had good cause to regret them, although the Kaiser shortly afterwards thanked him heartily for the success that had in the meantime been attained. When the unfavourable situation on the Marne set in he began to show signs that his health was breaking down. His is not the only case of a general suffering, both physically and morally, in difficult situations. It is only necessary to think of Frederick the Great to find another example. I regarded these signs of physical distress as transitory. But there were further, more serious, troubles behind, as was shown later by his sudden death at the commemoration of Field-Marshal von der Goltz.

Moltke had to retire from the front and take over the Deputy General Staff. We still continued to exchange letters. I could tell from his letters how hard it was for him to remain at home while the war was still in progress. He thought it his duty, however, to serve his country there, too. He was spared the necessity of having to live through the final collapse. With him there passed away a loyal, upright and noble man.

Like a leader who knows his own mind, he intervened in East Prussia at the beginning of the

war when the situation had grown involved. By the choice of the right men, Hindenburg and Ludendorff, and by ordering the right measures, he got order out of chaos. It was not granted to him to relieve the serious position on the Marne. He cannot, then, be judged according to results. He did his country greater service than is yet known. A more suitable time will come later to speak of this.

CHAPTER III

MILITARY PREPARATIONS FOR WAR AND POLITICS

I HAVE been asked by a historian whether the plans for the opening of the campaign had been drawn up in conjunction with the political leaders. This goes without saying. I do not know how the Chief of the General Staff and the Government leaders arranged it among themselves. It would, however, be a strange government that left its Chief of the General Staff to conduct his own politics. It would be impossible for him to draw up his plan of campaign until he was informed as to the political situation.

For a long time there had been no doubt in Germany as to who her adversaries were likely to be. There might have been some doubt as to whether England would take a hand in the struggle or whether, as has so often happened before, she would stand aside and derive all the profit she could out of the war between the other powers. In any case it was necessary to be prepared for her intervention in order to avoid being taken by surprise.

The popular view was accurately reflected in the following conversation which I accidentally overheard.

Immediately after England's declaration of war two respectable-looking men were talking things over in the neighbourhood of the Zoological Gardens in Berlin, and they came to the conclusion : " Now it is all up with us ! " A working man who happened to be passing shouted to them : " Not by a long way ! " Would that the whole people could have maintained to the end the confidence of this simple man !

There can be no doubt that France never for a moment gave up her plans for revenge. Her stubbornness in this respect is plainly to be seen in history. She avenged herself one after the other on her victorious enemies of 1815. First Russia in the Crimean war, and then Austria in the Italian war. Her attempt to deal with us in the same way failed in 1870-71. Against us, therefore, she had a double debt to wipe out.

The enmity of Russia, on the other hand, was not based on history, but was none the less real. The railways leading to our frontier, which had been built with French gold, certainly pointed to aggressive intentions. England was in the first place responsible for turning her against us politically. In contrast to this, Germany was in a position to point to her love of peace which had for many decades consistently pervaded her politics. There have been times, indeed, when she has gone too far in her anxiety to conciliate, and in doing so has made

herself the laughing-stock of the world. The Emperor wanted to live and die as the Peace-Emperor. Our people would do well to keep constantly before their eyes this contrast between our policy and that of our enemies, instead of being content to repeat like parrots their accusations that it was we who were responsible for the war.

The last thing that the people thought likely was that we should find ourselves at war with the Japanese. During the first few days of mobilisation I was myself a witness of the way in which a number of Japanese in Berlin were cheered by the people. It was generally expected that Japan would declare war on Russia. The yellow sons of the East received the popular enthusiasm, of which they found themselves the cause, with broad grins. How does it come about that our people are so immature when it comes to politics and are so easily carried away by anything foreign? Now we are stupid enough to allow our enemies to persuade us that the guilt of the war lies with us. I remember listening once to a political conversation in the train between intelligent men of the world whom I took to be connected with business. They were unanimously of the opinion that it was a mistake to declare war first, and a further mistake to make our attack through Belgium. It did not seem to occur to them for a moment that it would have been nothing more or less than suicide for Germany to have waited until all her enemies

had completed their mobilisation and taken the field. I know that England and France were asked what steps they would take in the case of a war with Russia, and Belgium was asked to permit our armies to march through her territory.

Their answers to these questions would give the clue to their attitude. In the case of England, however, a mistake occurred that was to have the most fateful consequences. The first information that came through seemed to point to neutrality; so much so that the Emperor wanted to give orders for mobilisation against Russia alone. It was not long, however, before this mistake was put right.

Another thing that our people have not estimated at its true value is the importance of the part played by the Russian mobilisation in bringing on the war. They prefer to listen to the voice of the enemy, who are careful to maintain silence on the question of Russia's conduct, and allow themselves to be led away by certain organs of the Press which, in utter disregard of national loyalty, range themselves on the side of the enemy. The unselfish and conscientious work of those who expend their energy in the interest of their Fatherland and fellow-countrymen is regarded with suspicion and depreciated. Thus even our careful preparations to meet the contingency of war are counted among the causes of its outbreak. But this question of preparations applies to every state, and it must be so, for

a campaign cannot be carried on, on the impulse of the moment. There is no justification for regarding these preparations as evidence of an intention to force war upon the world. They are nothing more than a sign that we did not intend to allow ourselves to be taken by surprise.

When France was the only enemy, old Moltke could march into Lorraine and there wait for the enemy to attack. When Russia threw in her lot with France, Waldersee could not afford to wait until the enemy had completed their preparations for a concerted attack, but was obliged to attack France, who was most easily accessible and whose preparations were the farthest advanced; and that before Russia could intervene, so that he had no choice but to take the shortest way in spite of the forts that barred that way. As this possibility had been excluded by the development of the French system of fortification, Schlieffen had to seek other methods.

It was to be expected that the Russian attack would be made without loss of time, for she had already concentrated large forces near to the frontier, and these could quickly be reinforced by means of the recently developed railway system. To seek protection against these behind the Vistula would have been ill-advised. Our eastern provinces might need protection. The invasion by Russia would seem to show that our people have less powers of

resistance with which to face the sheer hardships that war brings in its train than the French, who in spite of the capture by their enemies of larger and more important areas of territory than was the case in East Prussia, never allowed it to affect the firmness of their bearing. But in this connection it must be remembered that in their invasion of Germany the Russians showed themselves far more ruthless foes than we did in France.

Schlieffen therefore was faced with the necessity of scoring a rapid success against one of the enemies. It could not be Russia, for the Russians would have had no hesitation about retreating further and further into their vast country and so avoiding a decisive issue until their allies were able to make themselves felt. The only course that remained open, then, was an attack on France and the march through Belgium.

As to the justice of this move, opinions are so sharply divided that it is not to be expected that an agreement will ever be reached. Each party puts the blame on the opponent. Apart from that our enemies have now proved their right by means of their might. However that may be, simple reasoning leads to the question: Why is it always Belgium that is the subject of the outcry and not the equally neutral state of Luxembourg; and why is it that long before the war Belgium only conducted negotiations with our enemies and not with us, as

might have been expected from an honourable neutrality?

I am only anxious here to make clear the military side of this question. It is certainly not without interest, especially to-day, to know that the first person to realise the necessity of a German march through Belgium was an American. Schlieffen mentioned this in passing in the course of one of his lectures.

CHAPTER IV

MOBILISATION

WE have always prepared for the eventuality of war by dint of hard and conscientious work, but we did not seek to precipitate it. In any case we in the army had little thought of the imminence of war in the year 1914. At that time I was in command of a frontier division in Deutsch-Eylan. We knew that there were strong forces of Russian cavalry facing us and that we might reckon on an early encounter with them. Our defensive measures were already prepared. The officers were well acquainted with the task that lay before them and had been well trained in the steps they were to take. These manœuvres on a large scale offer opportunities of constructing probable war situations, as is the custom in all armies. That we were on the brink of war never entered anyone's head.

It is true that for a long time there had been anxiety among the inhabitants of the frontier area. Their misgivings were exploited by unscrupulous dealers who persuaded the people to give them their paper money in exchange for a smaller payment in

cash by representing to them that in time of war the paper money would be of no value. Unfortunately the report of these negotiations did not leak out until it was too late for anything to be done.

Even when the news of the murder of the Archduke at Sarajevo, and the Russian mobilisation against Austria became known, many people did not realise that it meant war. No preparations were made, as has since been alleged. Not until the announcement from Berlin of " threatening danger of war " arrived was it known that it was necessary to take war into account as a serious possibility.

It is usual for this announcement to be followed a few hours later by the order to mobilise. The announcement is intended to give opportunity for getting in hand the preliminary work connected with mobilisation. It shows complete ignorance of the circumstances, or an evil intention, when the statement is made that we had already mobilised secretly. It is impossible in our country to mobilise secretly, for mobilisation involves a complete dislocation of the whole country. The migration of the masses of men called to the colours and the levying of the horses goes on in the sight of every one, for they take up the whole of the transport facilities. In spite of this, however, such nonsense as this is believed even in our own country ; all the enemy have to do is to go on repeating it in the full tones of conviction.

The preliminary warning from Berlin was

followed a few hours later by the order to mobilise, and the following day was appointed as the first day of mobilisation. All the work is arranged by days so that the mobilisation can be carried through in a definite time. In Deutsch-Eylan the war claimed one victim at once. A man who had been called up was seen approaching a railway tunnel. The sentry of the railway guard challenged him, and as he did not answer, fired. Fortunately he was only wounded.

In Deutsch-Eylan several unpleasant results of the mobilisation at once became apparent. In some of the shops the shop-keepers refused to accept German paper money at its face value. For a one-hundred mark note only eighty marks in cash would be given, and in the schnapps shops there was a good deal of heavy drinking. It did not take long to put down these evils. I gave orders that placards should be posted to the effect that any one who was found offering for German paper money less than its full value would render themselves liable to be tried by court-martial. The drinking-shops were closed down.

Trouble arose among the workmen because, owing to the dearth of small change, it was always necessary to pay several of them together with a larger note. The General Staff had drawn attention to this shortage of small notes years before, and the Treasury had been advised that it would be well to

make a provision of such notes against the possibility of a shortage of small change ; this had, as a matter of fact, already been done, but it took some little time before the result became noticeable.

I was appointed Quartermaster-General and was obliged to leave my division, which I thought I had conscientiously trained for this theatre of war, at the very moment when the first shots were being fired on the frontier.

At the beginning of the year I had begged the Chief of the General Staff, von Moltke, to give up the idea of appointing me to this post, but he asked me to take it on for one more year. I accepted it, however, trusting in the ability of those who were to be my colleagues and because I knew that I should be closely associated with the Chief of the General Staff, whose assistant and colleague I had been for many years.

In this way it came about that I left Deutsch-Eylan, where I had been stationed hitherto during the first few days of mobilisation, and travelled to Berlin, accompanied by my family. Nothing could be taken with us with the exception of the most necessary articles of clothing and equipment. The train was full to overflowing, but there was on grumbling about the lack of space. Each individual did everything he possibly could to help his neighbours to bear the discomforts of the long journey. This train was on a small scale a model of the unity

and readiness for self-sacrifice of the whole people. As we approached the bridges that span the Vistula we could read on the notice-boards the warning: "Don't look out of the windows!" Force was given to the warning by the sight of sentries who were posted on the bridges with loaded rifles. They were there to prevent any attempts to destroy the bridges on the part of agents of the enemy. Armed men, some in uniform and some in civilian clothes, were posted along the railway to guard the permanent way; every thing and every one had been pressed into the service of the State. The men who had been called to the colours were travelling to join their units and stations and were full of enthusiasm. No one could have believed that this sacred fire of enthusiasm would die down to lifeless ashes.

At times the excitement was even too fierce, as I was to experience personally in Berlin. After I had taken leave of my family I went to take up my residence at the *Hospiz des Westens*. There, shortly after my arrival, three worthy men appeared and informed me that I was a Russian spy. As, after giving them my name and rank, I did not take any further notice of their accusations, they went away dissatisfied. In the evening a large crowd assembled in front of the hotel and a policeman entered and asked me rather shamefacedly for my papers. It was obvious that his task was very distasteful to him. I handed him the whole of my papers to read,

although he had had enough when he had read the first. After that he took his departure after I had requested him to convey my compliments to the crowd that was waiting in front of the door. I also learned the cause of the suspicion with which I had been regarded, and which I had been all the less able to understand, as I had never been out except in uniform. It appeared that it was the hang of my trousers that had aroused the suspicions of the people. They were not braced up tightly enough, with the result that they hung in folds ; trousers like that were supposed to be worn by Russian officers.

In the hotel there were a number of Germans who had hurried home from abroad to join the colours. The majority of the guests consisted of ladies by themselves, whose men-folk had already responded to the call of the Fatherland. Among these was Frau Ludendorff, whose husband was at the moment taking part in the fighting before Liège. We were old acquaintances, for Ludendorff had worked under me on the General Staff.

In order to avoid the delay involved in going to and fro to my work at General Staff Headquarters, I moved into residence there. Frau von Moltke had had the thoughtfulness to have a bed and other necessaries put up in my office so that I could devote myself to my work without losing any time in coming and going.

After I had reported myself to General von Moltke

he gave me a short survey of the situation. He told me that the Emperor had been very strongly opposed to the war. It was only after the case had been most strongly put before him that he gave his consent with a heavy heart.

It is pitiful to see to-day how quickly the people can be swung over from one side to the other. At that time every one was convinced that the Emperor was innocent in the matter of causing the war. What is the cause of this change ? Is it foreign influence or the machinations of fellow-countrymen that have fixed the guilt upon him ? It is another example of the truth of the old sad experience that nothing is less to be relied on than the favour of the crowd ; whoever builds thereon builds on sand.

Moltke summed up the situation calmly and with a level head. He was fully conscious of the difficulty of the task that lay before him, but he faced it with full confidence.

The Army Takes the Field

The concentration of the army was carried out along the whole of the Western frontier from Wesel to Alsace. The vast numbers of the troops made this great area necessary. It is a fact that during the concentration not a single enquiry reached General Headquarters from any unit or any Government Department, which is in itself a proof of the efficient

manner in which everything was arranged and carried through.

In the East only weak forces were available. Their numbers made it necessary to remain on the defensive in this theatre of war, but the defensive could if necessary be conducted by means of offence confined to small areas.

In the West the concentration offered no guarantee for any definite operation. The enemy might forestall us ; the network of railways which he had at his disposal made it seem possible that he would.

The statement that Germany had built her railway system solely with a view to its use in war is entirely without foundation. On the contrary, our railway system had been designed solely with a view to trade and traffic. It was not until a great deal of alteration had been carried out that it could be adapted to meet the military demands that were made upon it. Even Russia was more favourably situated with regard to railway communication than we were, thanks to the system she had been able to construct with the help of gold from France. It was only the care with which our preparations had been made that enabled us to overcome this handicap.

The operation through Belgium was made possible by the promptness with which the concentration of the army was carried through and by the quick capture of Liège.

While the actual concentration was being carried out General Headquarters found little reason to interfere, for everything worked with perfect smoothness, as had also been the case in 1870. Until the actual outbreak of hostilities, therefore, we had a comparatively quiet time.

CHAPTER V

WAR DAYS

MAIN Headquarters was still established in Berlin when the world-war was ushered in by the attack on Liège. It was a bold undertaking, which knocked on the head all accepted ideas about operations against fortresses, and even aroused misgiving among many of those who took part in it. In every daring venture success always hangs on a thread. The audacious decision has to be followed up by the will to carry it into effect. The first reports we received were not favourable. Some of the attacking columns had been held up or even forced to withdraw. Confusion and dismay were spreading among the transport columns in the rear. In short, things were taking a course such as is by no means unusual in war. Only a man of real resolution, who knows what war is, either from his work or by experience, is able to overcome all obstacles. Such a man was Ludendorff. To him we owed our success.

As soon as operations were in progress Main Headquarters was transferred to Coblenz. On the journey thither I stood at the window of the compartment in which I was travelling and watched the

fields of my homeland fly past. Even when night came down I was unable to tear myself away. Never had my Fatherland seemed so fair as at that moment when we were about to fight for its very existence and for everything that the word "home" meant to us.

At Coblenz we made our quarters in a hotel, the wall of which bore an inscription to the effect that the elder Moltke had resided there in the year 1870. His nephew took it as a good omen.

Two sad occurrences happened to disturb the otherwise unruffled course of our stay at Coblenz. An officer commanding a cavalry division, and bearing a very famous name, shot himself in the Eiffel. I have never been able to discover his reason. Next, a lady, well known at, and in the service of, the Court, shot herself in Coblenz. There is no question that in this case the cause was melancholy. I had sat opposite to her in the train and entered into conversation with her.

At that time, before the war with its terrible holocaust had somewhat deadened one's feelings, the death of acquaintances still affected one deeply.

While our advance in the West was taking its course according to plan, in the East the Russians had succeeded in invading the country and our counter-measures had failed. General von Prittwitz, in charge of the operations in that region, was faced with a heavy task. The peculiarities of this frontier district had previously been the subject of

much military speculation and discussion. The latest idea was said to be that the line of the Vistula must be held in case of a Russian invasion.

It is always a mistake when academic opinions of that kind influence the spirit in which the actual operations are conducted. Decisions must be taken only with an eye to the actual circumstances prevailing at the moment. Hindenburg, who was still unemployed at home, was hastily summoned, and Ludendorff was transferred to him in the capacity of Chief-of-Staff. The result was the Battle of Tannenburg, strategically as well as tactically one of the most brilliant military operations of all time.

The progress of the movements in the West made it necessary for us to transfer our headquarters to Luxembourg. The villages in that country had very much the same appearance as German villages. It was impossible to say the same of the towns. The proprietor of the hotel in which I was living said he was the only friend of Germany in the place and thought he would have to leave if we were forced to evacuate it. For the matter of that, he often behaved in none too friendly a manner towards us.

At that time I was not faced with any special difficulties in dealing with the local populations and the authorities. On the other hand, I will give one example to show that an army, however well behaved it is, always contains some evilly-disposed associates.

A man was caught in the uniform of a non-commissioned officer who had been going round in a

motor-car from one village to another levying contributions in money. He had a supply of special notes with him which he left behind with the local authorities as receipts of a military authority for the sums forthcoming. It turned out that he was a soldier who had been discharged for medical unfitness, and who, instead of making his way back to the rear, had been extorting money all over the country, sometimes in the guise of a non-commissioned officer, at others as an officer. At the time he was caught he had managed to collect thirty thousand francs. How many scoundrels may have injured the fair name of our army then and later on by such behaviour !

The villagers were highly delighted when their money was returned to them. The miscreant, unfortunately, was not amenable to justice, so far as I was concerned, as he had already left the army. I should have had him shot out of hand. I am afraid the civil courts treated him with greater leniency.

As the armies were advancing with extreme rapidity, and those on the right wing were in touch with us only by wireless telegraphy, Luxemburg would obviously be unsuitable for our headquarters before long. Among the Kaiser's immediate entourage there was a considerable feeling against moving Main Headquarters into France itself. The Kaiser himself did not share that feeling, but had a decided objection to Sedan as our residence.

Now came the reverse on the Marne. At the present moment opinion about that event is still confused and in its broad lines wrong. I myself am, of course, acquainted with some aspects of the affair, but as the whole circumstances are still unknown to me I am not yet in a position to express a conclusive judgment. I must postpone that to some later time.

After the retreat I went on a visit to the armies. Composure and order were observable everywhere. While I was with the 2nd Army (von Bülow's) I was able to witness the vain attempts of the French and English to break through in the neighbourhood of Rheims. Fort Brimont proved a magnificent viewpoint.

On this occasion I was able to take part in a battle for the first time. The conduct of the action was not very resolute and did not make a particularly favourable impression upon me. As I was an unattached observer I betook myself to a Jäger Company in the trenches. These "trenches" had nothing in common but the name with the trenches which were constructed later on. The men were obviously pleased that I had come to pay them a visit, and those nearest to me told me of their experiences. We were not much troubled by infantry fire. Only artillery sent their greetings in our direction.

My adjutant, however, would not leave me in peace and brought me bodily out of the trenches. I

could not deny the justification of his acting thus. Even soldiers must give up their dreams of youth when they have reached old age or attained to high positions. I know one Corps Commander who rushed into the first-line trenches to join his troops in the first engagement. I can well understand such an action, but all the same it was a mistake. The trenches are not the Commander's place; he has other and more important things to do.

In critical situations, of course, he must be allowed to risk his own person. Many such examples are to be found in military history, but they have not always been attended with glory such as Napoleon's when he rushed the bridge at Atcola with the flag in his hand. All the same, when I was in actual command of troops later on, I could not help envying my young officers who had opportunities of distinguishing themselves by their courage, skill and ready wits in action, whilst I was tied to my headquarters.

While I was at Rheims I witnessed the withdrawal of the French, which was carried out in good order under heavy artillery fire. Then I went by a roundabout way to the 1st Army (von Kluck's), as it was uncertain whether enemy cavalry had not broken through between the two armies. As a matter of fact, there was a gap about thirteen miles wide between them. I found the army hotly engaged just at the moment when the report came

through : " The English are retreating ! " Now at last were we absolutely certain that the army had not been separated, as had been feared.

I drove back to Luxembourg during the night. When I arrived in the morning I found my appointment to the command of the 14th Reserve Corps waiting for me. I took a short but moving farewell from Moltke. He seemed to me to be very ill, and said : " You have been sacrificed for me." I did not, however, regard myself in any way as a scapegoat, but was only too glad to find myself once more a leader of troops in the field. Then I reported myself to the Kaiser and made the suggestion that Main Headquarters should be more centrally situated behind the line as it was too far from the right wing. He was fully in agreement with the proposal, but there was still a good deal of hesitation among the men in his immediate entourage.

I now went by familiar roads through Lorraine, past Metz and Morchingen, to the Vosges, where I was to take over the command of my Corps. It had been engaged in some bloody actions in the mountain forests, especially round the Donon, but it was enjoying a comparatively quiet spell when I joined it.

Within a very few days we received quite fresh orders. We were withdrawn through Saarburg in Lorraine to the neighbourhood of Saint Avold and Bolchen in readiness to be sent forward against Antwerp. I should have been very glad to go there,

as I did not believe much in the strength of that fortress and knew that the section of the front we should probably have to attack was in course of reconstruction.

We travelled through the Rhineland and the Eiffel *via* Aachen and Liège. The old unrestrained enthusiasm was still observable everywhere in Germany. We were given the most boisterous welcome and quite overwhelmed with presents. Once the frontier was crossed, however, the scene changed. No more food was forthcoming, and we were sent on from one supply depôt to another. During the journey fresh marching orders had reached us. We were to go to Cambrai. As a result of this our move was to take about seventy hours instead of thirty ; we had to consume our iron rations. Another effect of the change of plans was that the sequence of trains was interrupted, and thus it happened that the train of our Corps Headquarters, with only forty rifles and carbines, was the first to arrive in Cambrai.

In Cambrai French doctors were moving about undisturbed in uniform. There was nothing to show that they were not officers. Steps had to be taken to put things in order. A strange type of German girl began to be unpleasantly noticeable. How they got there I cannot explain, but they tried to pass themselves off as nurses ; they were soon removed and replaced by Red Cross nurses.

On the following day our outposts that had been

pushed forward in the direction of Bapaume were attacked. Meanwhile communication had been established with Headquarters in St. Quentin. Orders were received that we should press forward as quickly as possible to Albert by way of Bapaume. That was easier said than done. My troops were only gradually coming in and were still being detrained, while there was a particular shortage of artillery. The reconnaissance of the area in our front had only just been begun ; in front of us there were said to be strong forces of French and British cavalry. An abandoned French battery was found by our cavalry in the neighbourhood of Cambrai. Perhaps it was a relic of earlier fighting. In another place lay the ruins of a train of our motor transport wagons that had been destroyed by an enemy force of armoured cars. The signs of war and conflict were increasing.

It is a strange business when one is thrust suddenly in this way into new conditions. One knows very little of what is going on ; the air is alive with rumours which exaggerate everything. It is only gradually that the situation begins to clear and touch begins to be established with the enemy and with the troops on either flank who are in a similar position.

On the left we established touch with the Second Bavarian Corps, which was under orders to advance north of the Somme to the Lower Ancre. Our right

flank was to be covered by two bodies of cavalry but they had not yet come up.

In view of the situation in which I found myself it will not be counted to my discredit that I expressed myself in very plain language to a young officer of the Headquarters Staff who wanted to hurry me forward.

On the third day the advance was begun, the right column (26th Reserve Division), under General Freiherr von Soden, marching on Bapaume, the left column (28th Reserve Division), under General von Pawel, passing Bapaume on the left. A considerable number of my force had not yet come up, while the majority of those who had, began the march immediately after detraining without even a night's rest or a meal. But the men of the old army were tried men and knew their duty.

The right column soon encountered the enemy. I immediately set out in a car and drove straight to where the column was situated in order to speak to the commanding officer, who was said to be with the advance guard. As we approached the column we saw the first of our dead. Out of a wood on the right of the road appeared a long line of trenches. " That is the enemy ! " called out my Chief-of-Staff, Lieutenant-Colonel Bronsart von Schellendorf, who was beside me. We drove behind a tile-works where I came upon the commander of the column. He was deploying his troops calmly and methodically.

The affair soon came to an end. It was not long before the enemy was overcome, and it took even less time for him to disappear.

Then I drove in the direction of the left column. On my way I came upon a cavalry division which should long ago have been in position covering our right flank, blocking the road in a village. I did not greet them in a very friendly spirit.

When I came up with the left column I found that they had already been deployed and were engaged with the enemy not far from the Bapaume-Peronne road. In front of us a battalion of Jäger had opened fire. Just then a column of heavy transport appeared, advancing calmly towards us. When I asked them where they thought they were going, they answered : " To join the battalion." It was the transport column of the battalion of Jägers I have just mentioned. I immediately ordered them to go back, and I mention the occurrence as an example of the way in which in war the most unexpected things, that would in the ordinary way be thought impossible, are daily occurrences, and every officer must be prepared to meet such contingencies. It often occurs, however, that their knowledge and experience are not equal to the occasion. The young officer is too liable to expect in war the orderly routine to which he has grown accustomed in peace, and is easily put out by anything unexpected. He must, however, be prepared for any emergency and

bear in mind that it is possible even for the best of troops and the bravest of men to lose their heads.

Here, as with the other column, the fight went forward quickly and the enemy disappeared.

The officer commanding the column proposed to rest his men and wait for the fall of dark, as he was afraid that if he pushed the advance too far the marching columns might come under the fire of the batteries of enemy horse-artillery. Our field artillery at that time had not as yet found the range of the enemy artillery and so could not prevent this. In the meantime, the afternoon had come on, the corps had not yet reached its full strength, and the men were very tired after their exertions, so I ordered them to have a meal and rest for a bit. We thought the fighting was at an end for the time being. Orders were given for outposts to be thrown out in the neighbourhood of the Ancre. Just as the transport of the Headquarters had been despatched to a village not far from Longueval, an officer of the 2nd Bavarian Corps appeared and reported that this corps was in action with the enemy on the right wing at Longueval. The news was all the more surprising because this corps had already sent us a report that they had in the morning defeated the enemy on their front. Apart from this, too, it was strange that no sound of firing had reached our ears in spite of the shortness of the distance from the position we were then occupying.

Orders were once more given for the divisions to get on the march, the right column following the road that led to Albert, the left column marching direct to Longueval. The latter did not become involved in any further fighting; the enemy had withdrawn before their advance. The division on the right had to fight its way through to its quarters near the Ancre in the darkness which had come on in the meantime. When our baggage arrived at the place where it had been intended to take up quarters for the night it was found that the village had been the scene of fighting and had been set on fire by the heavy firing. It was brought back without mishap, however, in the charge of an adjutant. Headquarters was established in the considerable village of Le Transloi, and accommodation was found in an imposing farmhouse. The house bore witness to the prosperity of the owners. In the room which was assigned to me it was difficult to move about owing to the great quantity of comfortably upholstered furniture with which it was filled. The farmer's family, however, used the kitchen as their living-room. After the battle of the Somme I saw this same village in a state of ruin and desolation, and before that I was a witness of the sad spectacle presented by the wretched inhabitants fleeing for their lives. This sort of thing makes one reflect how much Germany has been spared, and might still have been spared, if only she had wished!

The fighting was renewed on the following day. At first we had only been opposed by patrols and cavalry which had not offered any considerable resistance, but now there appeared troops of the line strongly supported by artillery which had taken up excellent positions on the heights beyond the Ancre and between the Ancre and the Somme. The 2nd Bavarian Corps came to a halt at the fortified village and castle of Maricourt. We reached the line Thiepval-Fricourt. On the right and to our rear the enemy was still in possession of the villages round Miraumont and to the north and rear of that place. We therefore had him on all sides of us. The cavalry divisions on our right were now in position and had hard work to hold their own in front of the villages that were in the hands of the enemy. When one cavalry division on our extreme right failed to hold its ground the enemy threatened my line of retreat and communication to Cambrai. One cavalry leader of my acquaintance shouted to me as we met: "Stein, Stein, we're in an awful mess!"

However, we did not lose heart, and succeeded in taking the villages in the flank and rear, for the most part by means of a night attack. The army commander, the Crown Prince of Bavaria, came to see me just at this time and was very astonished at the position in which he found us, but also very pleased that we had been able to get as far as we had. It is easy for those in high places to obtain wrong

impressions. Even von Falkenhayn, who was at that time Chief-of-Staff to the army, sent me a message based on information obtained from a French general, according to which my corps and that next to me were stated to have been held up the whole day by patrols. I was able to furnish an energetic reply to this by pointing out that on the first day of the march the men had come straight off the transport trains, not up to strength, and for the most part without being able to get a meal or a sleep, but in spite of that they had advanced a distance of forty-five kilometres and fought two engagements on the way. This was certainly an exceptional achievement and I did not intend that my men should be deprived of the credit that was their due.

At that time we were holding, along the Ancre and to the rear of it, a front of twenty-seven kilometres, and were opposed to a numerical superiority of twice our own strength. There, of course, we had come to a standstill. But the position improved daily. New corps came up behind us and extended the line on our right flank after securing our position by the occupation of Bapaume. I give details of this situation in order to show that even in times of crisis there is no need to despair, and that the surest way to hold the enemy is by attack. When one is left to one's own resources it is necessary to act with more caution, but when there is a prospect of reinforcements it is possible to take a good deal of risk.

In the line we had now reached, the fighting gradually settled down to a war of positions. On the other side of the Ancre the two villages of Beaucourt and Beaumont were captured by a night attack and in this way we were able to establish touch with the Guards' Corps, which had been advancing under heavy fighting on our right and now carried on the line through Serre in the direction of Arras as far as Monchy.

I had established my headquarters in the pretty but poor village of Martinpuich. There we surprised a few modest summer visitors from Paris who had not been able to get away. In this place we were so close to our troops that we could tell immediately what was going on in the firing-line. At first we were very cramped for room. We had two rooms between us. In one of them I lived and we messed together; the other served as an office and living-room for several officers. In this room was also the telephone, which in some ways we could well have spared. Several of my staff had for a long time to be content with a bed of straw for their night's rest. It was only gradually that we were able to extend our quarters. The enemy fire only reached the village occasionally, and perhaps by accident. The French at that time did their best to spare those villages which were not situated directly in the firing-line; this was in great contrast to the English methods. Also they kept to certain

fixed times and limits for their bombardment so that it was easy to get out of the way.

The light-hearted spirit in which our men still regarded those things at that time is well illustrated by the following incident: One day when I was sitting in my room in the company of several officers of my staff a shell fell in a small, not very prosperous-looking farm that lay opposite to our headquarters. The men who were billeted there rushed out of the farm like a swarm of bees and took refuge behind a house. The fat cook who was engaged in stirring a stew-pan in the courtyard of the farm, waved his ladle and shouted: "It hasn't done me any harm for it fell in the stable!" and went on with his stirring as though nothing had happened. But our servants and orderlies had meanwhile run to the gate of the garden in front of my house to get a better view of what was going on. One of them shouted to his companions: "I say! in peace-time you wouldn't see a sight like that if you paid a thousand thalers!"

I have very pleasant recollections of my quarters in Martinpuich. I lived in a little country house which had once been the residence of the doctor, who was now with the army. The house had been left in the charge of his sister, a matronly woman of uncertain age, who looked very impressive when she was got up in her best clothes, but at other times had a rather slovenly appearance. She spent most of

her time making purses by sewing together bits of leather. There was some uncertainty as to her past history. When, on my first arrival, I asked for her husband, she replied abruptly: "I haven't a husband." Some time later I found out that she was supposed to have lived for some time in New York, where she was said to have made a lot of money. It was also reported that she had a very pretty daughter who was being educated in a convent in Paris. Among the inhabitants of the village she had the reputation of being rich and miserly. She kept horses and a carriage, and her staff of servants consisted of a small urchin and a dirty girl, who seemed to spend their whole time squabbling together. We got on quite well with our hostess, and often made her presents out of our own supplies. When our stay was coming to an end we asked her to let us take away with us a number of ordinary red cups which had been reserved for our use, and which my officers wanted to keep as souvenirs; in return we presented her with the finest tea-set that we were able to raise in St. Quentin. With this she was more than delighted. She came to see me some time later in Bapaume to ask me to use my influence to have her deported into France, away from the occupied area. In the wonderful splendour with which she was arrayed on this occasion I should never have recognised her as the same woman.

I could bring forward a good deal of evidence as proof of the peaceful relations that existed between the troops and the inhabitants of the occupied area. In the large area that the corps was occupying, and which included about sixty parishes, it was only necessary to inflict an almost negligible number of punishments upon the inhabitants. I was careful, however, to refrain from issuing any unnecessary or irksome regulations. At the present time our fellow-countrymen on the left bank of the Rhine find some of the regulations laid down by the enemy unjust and humiliating, particularly the regulation with regard to saluting. Some commanding officers introduced this in France at the time of which I am writing. I am opposed to regulations which I should myself object to if I were in the position of the other side.

There are, however, cases in which such regulations as this, and others of a similar type, have to be enforced in order to ensure outward respect ; at the same time care should be taken that this is not done without good reason. Naturally it is not to be expected that enemy inhabitants who have been well treated and are apparently well disposed, should go on showing themselves friendly when they are subjected to rebuffs ; those who have been treated badly will certainly not do so, for that would be contrary to all national feeling. Such a state of things could not be found anywhere except

in Germany, where national feeling does not exist.

In France, too, incidents occurred which brought out the kindly human feeling of the inhabitants. One day, when I was going to attend the funeral of two airmen who had been accidentally killed while flying, I was surprised to find in front of the church a number of elderly men in black clothes. When I asked in astonishment how it was that so many relatives had come to the funeral, I was informed that the inhabitants of the village had asked that they might be allowed to take part in the ceremony. The deceased had been billeted in the village.

Our kitchen was looked after by a young girl who came from Martinpuich, who, at her own request, had accompanied us to Bapaume. A few weeks later I happened to find the girl in tears and asked her what she was crying for. She told me she felt homesick, although the two places were barely a mile apart, and she could go and visit her family whenever she wanted to do so. When I pointed out to her that Martinpuich was being pretty heavily bombarded and that she would be in constant danger if she went back to live there, she replied that she would rather die at home than live in a strange place. I had to let the girl go back, although I was very loth to do so. It is to be hoped that she escaped the destruction that befell her home.

In many of the inhabitants their German descent

was noticeable in their colouring and features. The fair-haired children, and also large numbers of the older people, might easily have gone to live in a German village without attracting attention.

It is true that not a day passed without fighting taking place at one point or another, but in spite of it all our life flowed along pretty peacefully. About Christmas time in 1914 the fighting grew heavier. It brought out an incident which was very instructive to the officers concerned. While the fighting was in progress the transport columns were noticed to be growing restless, although they lay far back in the rear well out of range of the fighting. The men were shouting: "They're falling back! Why doesn't someone order the horses to be put in so that we can retire?" What was the reason for this? The officer in command of the division that was being attacked had ordered all the baggage that had been brought up to be loaded up and everything to be got ready to march, as is the custom in every engagement in the open. I gave orders that this practice should be discontinued. In the type of warfare on which we were then engaged we had either to stand or fall. If the transport was lost it did not make any odds.

On one occasion the Emperor was travelling past and came to visit Bapaume. He did not come to Martinpuich, as it was right that he should not, but he sent me hearty greetings. I heard later from some of his staff that dreadful stories were being

circulated about my headquarters at Martinpuich. According to these we were supposed scarcely to have a roof to our heads and we were said to be sleeping on straw. This was not true at all; our quarters were simple, but they were good. A long time afterwards the Emperor paid me a visit in another place, St. Leger, in order to confer distinctions and to address the men. The guns were thundering and the shells were falling quite near. It was a relief to me when the exalted guest was once more seated in his car and driving away into safety, for even the road by which he had come was not free from danger. This should be taken to heart by those people who accuse the Emperor of taking his part in the fighting at a safe distance of fifty kilometres in rear of the firing-line. That is a mean slander, like so many others.

The old village church of Martinpuich will always remain clearly fixed in my memory. Its tower had fallen in years before and the bells stood in a farmyard near the dung-heap. Our engineers cleared away the ruins and gave a more dignified appearance to the disreputable-looking gable of the church. In this church we often held a service in the evenings in the dark. The bits of candle which some of the men brought with them only served to throw the darkness into sharper relief. It was not without anxiety that I took my place among my men and saw them thickly crowded together, and asked myself

what would happen if a shell should chance to fall on the building. We were spared such a disaster. At that time officers and men were still imbued with a spirit of earnestness ; they liked to come to church. In the course of the long war this has changed for the worse ; in face of the constant imminence of death the spirit of *carpe diem* gained the upper hand. A friendly inhabitant made me a present of a photograph of this church taken at a time when the tower was still standing, and a painter friend of mine who was visiting me made an oil painting of it.

I left this congenial village in January, 1916, and moved my headquarters to Bapaume. When, soon afterwards, I received the command of four divisions and took over the front as far as Monchy, I found that Bapaume was more conveniently situated for controlling this extended front than Martinpuich. We got quite accustomed to living in Bapaume. We did not leave it until the beginning of July, 1916. It was another simple, modest place and was devoid of any external attractions. Its beautiful church of the late Gothic period, with stained glass windows, was regularly used by us for divine service and classical concerts. The schools, which were of considerable size, were readily adapted for hospitals, and the hall of the municipal buildings made a very good lecture-room.

In spite of the continuous fighting plenty of time and energy were devoted to the things of the mind.

Scholars and artists placed their talents at the service of the troops. There was no lack of lectures, concerts and dramatic performances. On several occasions we even had the opportunity of enjoying the finished art of the company from the Royal Theatre at Stuttgart. The reserve regiments had formed bands since the outbreak of the war, and as the result of able training they soon did excellent work. Among others, a leading spirit in this work was a conductor from Bayreuth. Among the officers of one of the divisions was the leader of the orchestra of the Royal Theatre at Munich. He, and many talented and learned men from the training colleges and academies of South Germany, together with actors and artists of every kind who were found among the regiments, all did a great deal towards keeping up the spirits of the men under the stress of the time. At times like this it is just as important to provide food for the mind as for the body if the men are to be kept fresh and alert.

Of first importance, too, is, of course, the question of food supplies. Thanks to the devoted energy of our excellent quartermaster, Presting, this department received its full share of attention. My Chief-of-Staff at that time, von Kleist, instituted a school of cooking, which was attended by the regimental cooks in turn. It also provided food for the troops that were stationed in the town itself.

A trench newspaper was also founded in which

any one could air his opinions. It survived until the formation of the corps was changed. Perhaps this information will provide some young officer or other with a hint or suggestion that may be of use to him.

At that time we were still dealing with the tried officers and men of the old firmly-united and efficiently-trained army. There was at that time a high standard of religious feeling and thirst for knowledge. It is certain that, had it not been for the moral enthusiasm that inspired the men and the high standard of physical efficiency to which they had been trained, we should never have been able to hold our own as we did against an overwhelming numerical superiority in the battle of the Somme. Another factor that proved of great importance was the careful building of the trenches and strengthening of our position. Men are not eager to take part in this kind of work ; they must be kept to it with a firm hand. This task becomes less difficult when the men have once realised from experience how important the work is to their own personal safety. Some idea of the amount of work that had to be put in will be obtained when it is known that these divisions constructed over four hundred miles of front line and communication trenches, without counting the large numbers of dug-outs.

From time to time we found ourselves running very short of arms and ammunition. We were at

first reduced to making up the number of machine-guns, and even batteries of artillery, from the reserves, from captured material, and by begging them from other depôts. Later these measures were forbidden and what we wanted was issued to us. The shortage of ammunition gave the commanding officers many an anxious hour when they had to see men clutching their overcoats or falling down in front of them and begging : " Order the artillery to fire. We are only too willing to hold out, but the artillery won't back us up." Such incidents as this grip you at the heart when you know that you can only allow a small number of rounds to be fired through the day owing to the greater need for the ammunition in other places.

At times it was the same thing with the sand-bags. These sacks that were used for cover, and which cost so much labour to erect, were continually being shot away. It was almost impossible to keep up with the demand by means of spade and shovel ; it was necessary to have the sacks ready at hand. During my period of office as Minister for War I had to take action against a firm who were alleged to have been charging exorbitant prices for sand-bags. In addition the officer who was responsible for the contract was brought to book. If he had heard complaints and curses like those which filled our ears at that time I can sympathise with the remark he finally made : " It matters nothing to me where I get them and what price I pay for them ! "

In spite of all the shortage we managed to hold out until relief came.

It always gave me great pleasure to visit the men in the trenches. The ways that led to these trenches were more dangerous than the trenches themselves, except at such times when fighting was actually going on. Those visits gave me an opportunity to test myself. You find that you regard danger with indifference as a rule. Then there come days when you have to take a firm hold of yourself. Many will have experienced this. The man who has the easiest time in this way is the one who does not know what danger means. A man whose mind continually runs on it is lost.

I was very grateful to the men for the anxious care with which they looked after my safety while I was among them in the trenches. They kept saying : " Excellency, you ought not to go that way ; that part of the trench is always under machine-gun fire. You ought not to drive that way or you will be seen by the enemy artillery," and so on. A worthy rifleman once dragged me down from the fire-step because an enemy sharpshooter in a tree opposite was taking aim at me. I felt so secure among the men and could confidently entrust my life and safety to their care. And what has become of all this German loyalty to-day ? It seems to be a thing of the past.

The villages through which the trenches ran, and

those immediately behind the firing-line, had been reduced to ruins by the artillery fire. Certain pictures of them stick with particular distinctness in my memory.

Many a time I have gone into a village churchyard and found the graves of people who had died long before torn open by the heavy shells. It was a horrible spectacle! In one village the church, which stood rather high, was a favourite target for the enemy artillery. Through the ruins of the shell-shattered roof the clouds looked down on a scene of ruin and desolation. Leaning up against a pillar stood a figure of Christ supported by its pedestal. When it had hung above, the arms had been outstretched in benediction; down here as it lay against the pillar it raised one arm in accusation. On the ruins of the high altar stood an untouched figure of the Blessed Virgin surveying with wide-open eyes the scene of destruction. It would have provided a good subject for an artist or a poet. My artist friend tried to make a picture of the little church, but he was driven away by the fire of the enemy.

But the sight that made the deepest impression was that of the graves of our dead which lay within the lines. They had been laid to rest by their comrades where they had fallen or close by. Little graveyards tended with loving care marked the spot. Among the larger graveyards further in the rear it was possible to do more in the way of ornament.

These are the places where the artists should have made their studies if they had wanted to catch the true psychology of the fighting man. Some time later I saw an exhibition of graveyard sculpture in an art gallery in Berlin. It did not give the real atmosphere of life and death in the trenches; the impression it made was one of coldness and want of understanding.

In the graveyard of Bapaume we erected a monument for the whole corps, not far from the inartistic monument erected by the French to commemorate the war of 1870. Our monument consisted of a simple pyramid, which was surrounded by the graves of our and the enemy dead. The names of those who were taking their last rest there were carved on tablets and stones that would withstand the ravages of time. Side by side with these stood the grave of a Prussian officer of the Guards who had been killed in 1871. I had the following words carved on the monument:

> "We do homage to our dead
> Who gave up their lives loyally and without fear.
> Their mortal remains we have here laid to rest,
> Their spirit, released, has gone home."

What will remain of these tokens of affection and respect now that the terrific battles of the later periods of the war have swept over them! However this may be, their memory will not fade, for pictures of the monument have been sent to every part of the

empire. The corps was a model in miniature of united Germany made up of all the German tribes: Schwabians and Badeners, inhabitants of the Hanseatic towns and Mecklenburgers, Westphalians and Thuringians, men from the Marches, Saxons, Rheinlanders and Bavarians—all were represented.

I often paid a visit to this graveyard. With the flowers and foliage that had been planted there it had a more cheerful, friendly appearance than most graveyards in Germany. The homely gravestones were not striking. The grave of a young musician was an exception; it was ornamented by a Parisian sculptor with a striking figure of a weeping muse. I had a photograph taken of this monument and put in safe keeping.

Our stay in Bapaume was disturbed almost every day by squadrons of aeroplanes. At first we were only provided with a few with which to oppose them; but an excellent anti-aircraft battery was stationed near the town and forced our enemies to exercise caution.

One night I was awakened by the sound of heavy firing. I got up and went to the window and had just reached it when a bomb burst in the next garden, scarcely twenty yards from where I was standing. An airship was passing over the town. Two houses were destroyed by the bombs, including the military post-office. Unfortunately, an officer who was passing through the town, and who had been

billeted in a neighbouring house, was killed by a falling beam. The house in which I was sleeping, and I myself, were quite unharmed; the shell and its contents had all been buried in the earth of the broad garden. Later, judging by some unexploded shells we picked up, we were forced, to our great astonishment, to the conclusion that it was one of our own airships that had lost its bearings and got out of control. The unhappy commander is said to have been killed later himself.

I only saw one enemy airship, and that was some time later in another village not very far away. It passed over our headquarters during the night and dropped all its bombs in an open field without doing any harm.

The aeroplanes, however, were unwelcome visitors until the Fokker machine made its appearance. Then the enemy tried to regain the mastery by great superiority of numbers.

The most famous flying men came from our lines. Immelmann was with the neighbouring army, but he used to make his appearance as soon as the heavy fire of our anti-aircraft guns showed that something was going on over our lines. I was able to make his acquaintance after one of his victories, by the side of the fallen enemy aeroplane. One of his opponents was dead, the other unhurt. The latter told us how, during the fight, his friend had suddenly shouted out: "It's all up with us! It's

Immelmann!" Immediately afterwards he was struck by the shot that killed him.

Bölke was my flight commander. Any one who knew this quiet and modest man will know how great was my grief when one of my staff told me, with tears in his eyes, that Bölke was down. He had been my guest not very long before. The change from life to death was too sudden, and I, too, was not ashamed to weep. Richthofen, too, was once, I am told, a member of the squadron, but I have been unable to recall him. A Berlin artist has made me a present of an album containing etchings of these three airmen who, crowned with fame, fell in the service of their Fatherland.

I could name many other heroes whose names have not appeared before the public notice but live in the annals of the corps.

One patrol-leader in particular had won my respect by his courage and skill. But he had a passion that amounted to madness for "sausages," and especially the biggest ones. It was while engaged with one of these that he met his death.

A certain vice-sergeant-major, who by profession was a concert-singer, was known through the whole corps as a bold and successful patrol-leader. He was always at grips with the enemy. He, too, was one day brought back dead; one day while observing in a shell-hole he came to a sudden end.

Many officers, non-commissioned officers and men

could be mentioned whose heroism was known only within the corps, or whose heroic deeds were so frequent that men got used to them, and they almost ceased to attract attention. Their names, however, were mentioned in the Orders of the Day, together with an account of what they had done.

I will mention one with whom I was connected in a specially intimate way and of whom it is fitting that his name should be preserved in these pages. His death hit me very hard. The man I refer to was the youngest member of my staff, Captain Taute, a man of sunny temperament who radiated joy wherever he happened to be. Instead of going on leave when his turn came he asked that he might be allowed to take over the temporary command of a company in the trenches. The last day of his command had arrived, and in the evening he was to come back to his post on the staff. Then came a heavy attack. With heroic enthusiasm he threw himself into the fight and fought hand-to-hand with his men until the enemy were beaten back. In the evening he went out in front of the trench again accompanied by his orderly ; a stray shrapnel shell burst and killed them both. The officer commanding the next company to his has written a glowing account of his work in the trenches, and has described the fight in which he was engaged and his death. He did not wish to publish the description and presented it to me. Some day I shall give it to the public. In

such times as those in which we are now living it is right that no opportunity should be lost of setting before the public such examples of bravery, self-sacrifice and devotion to duty. We laid our beloved comrade to rest in enemy soil. On his tombstone are written the words :

" In youth you left us!
As the sun was setting after a day of hard battle
And the joy of victory still shone in your eyes,
You met your death.

We mourn for you in silence.
Yet each friend in our close-knit band of brothers
Is true to your memory and whispers softly:
You were dear to me."

When men died young like this the old words often came to my mind : " Whom the gods love die young." In those days one could not foresee how these words were to be emphasised by the events of the future.

It is not possible to erect a monument to every brave and loyal man, but each one has his place in the corporate body. For this reason I have sought to leave a lasting memorial to the 14th Reserve Corps, which since the war has ceased to exist. I sent to every member a copy of a description of a battle scene in which I have tried to give a picture of a typical deed from the field itself. The sketch, " Der Granathof," represents the whole corps. The field newspaper also was intended to serve as a memento of the corps. The same purpose is served

by the books I had published by my corps' printing press, as, for example, the first volume of the work, "The Castles of Northern France," and the picture, "La Tour," a reproduction of the famous pastel of St. Quentin.

But it does not require these outward signs to keep the memory of the corps indelibly stamped on the mind of every one of its members.

In the summer of 1916 there were increasing signs that a heavy offensive by the English was imminent. The fire of their artillery was gradually being increased in strength. We knew fairly accurately the strength of the force that was opposed to us, and we had to reckon with a four or five-fold numerical superiority. On June 24th the enemy began a week of terrific bombardment that was accompanied by day and night gas-attacks. On the last night of June Bapaume was bombarded by heavy artillery. When this happened we knew the attack was about to be launched, and on July 1st it was made in full force. Along nearly the whole line he was beaten back. Only on the left wing did he succeed in breaking through in a few places. Now began the superhuman struggle in which every foot of ground was disputed with the enemy that the break-through might be prevented. During this period I learned what it was to bear the heavy burden of responsibility and the uncertainty of the future. In order to prevent a break-through on the

left I had to withdraw battalion after battalion from the right wing, where the attack had been completely held, and bring them up in cars to the left wing. When I gave the senior staff officer, Major von Löwenfeld, the same order for the last battalion available, he said, with a tone of deep gravity: "Excellency, it is the last!" I answered: "Never forget this hour. One must make up one's mind to put in even the last, for the enemy, too, may be at the end of his tether."

This battalion proved sufficient to prevent the break-through, until reinforcements were sent up from G.H.Q. The battle lasted for months. I was not there to see the end. Towards the end of October I was appointed by the Emperor, Minister for War. For the second time I had to leave the troops, with whom I felt myself bound for life or death.

CHAPTER VI

THE WAR MINISTRY

PREVIOUS to my appointment as Minister I had never done any work at the Ministry for War. For this reason I was only slightly acquainted with the organisation, the routine and the personnel. It was some time before this difficulty could be overcome, owing to the fact that during the war the staff had been increased to an enormous extent and was scattered over every conceivable type of building in every part of the town. At that time the Ministry was employing a staff of between four and five thousand officers and civil servants. On the other hand, as a newcomer I had the advantage of being able to approach the work independently and unhampered by precedent, and could go my own way.

My colleagues were men of experience, accustomed to their work and absolutely to be relied on There was every need for their devoted and self-sacrificing energy. In contrast to the eight-hour day aimed at by other workers, my working day covered twice this number of hours and I was not rationed as a heavy worker. My colleagues were in

the same position ; many a night after a hard day's work I have found myself obliged to go hungry to bed.

The official residence of the Minister for War is in the same building, if I remember rightly, as that taken over for the Ministry for War in the year 1827. Before it was taken over it is said to have played a part in the artistic and intellectual life of Berlin. The reception rooms of the house are beautifully and artistically arranged, though in time of war these advantages were wasted. The living rooms were a long way off and were very scattered. Every time I wanted to go to my bedroom I had to indulge in quite a long constitutional. Apparently one of my predecessors had found considerable difficulty in finding his way about, for all the doors were provided with notices showing to which room they belonged. I found it easy to understand these precautions, for there were certain rooms about which I, too, remained uncertain to the last. I only went to my house for the purpose of sleeping or to take my meals. Much of it has been built on or absorbed in the course of years, and this helps to make the house rambling and difficult to work.

This difficulty of control is even more marked in the case of the offices of my colleagues, and in their part of the building it would be quite impossible to find one's way about without the services of a guide. The building which contains the Prussian Ministry

for War cannot for a moment bear comparison with that of the Turkish War Ministry in Constantinople. It is quite time that attention was turned to the provision of a new and more workable building for this Ministry. Attached is a beautiful garden in the nature of a park, and this I at once caused to be broken up and planted with vegetables, as befitted the exigencies of war-time.

Any one who wants to make his way to the office of the Minister for War must first pass through the Meldezimmer and the Ministersaal. Both these rooms go back to the great days of Prussia's past, which has now been wiped out through unfaithfulness and treachery. In the Meldezimmer are still to be seen on the shelves small figures, and on the walls are hung copies of sketches, which are the work of the painter Knotel, now dead. These figures and pictures illustrate the different uniforms worn by the different branches of the Prussian army, from the earliest times down to the present day.

On one occasion when a lady was visiting us, accompanied by her little boy, the child said: "Mother, are all these toy soldiers what uncle used to play with when he was a little boy? I expect he used to have them in his nursery." The child had too high an opinion of me. My nursery was God's free nature, and I have not fared badly there. The Ministersaal gives an impression of stern severity. Here are arrayed the portraits of all the

Prussian Brandenburg War Ministers, and of their officers—equally worthy of respect—the first of these being still in harness. The last of this distinguished gallery is General von Heeringen. After him there is room for one more. No place seems to be left for me. Scharnhorst and Roon would be astonished and indignant if they could see what is the present fate of their work. A member of the Social Democratic party from South Germany has given expression to the idea that I should be the last Minister for War as this office was interpreted by Roon. In front of the pictures and above them are arranged the busts and pictures of the kings of Prussia, together with their distinguished generals. The greater part of the centre of the room is taken up by the conference table, above which hangs a magnificent chandelier. Now that things have changed I shall never have the opportunity of seeing these apartments again.

It is unnecessary for me to devote much space to description of the work of the Ministry for War. It was carried on with unsparing conscientiousness, and its efficiency and thoroughness are beyond question. In many directions a freer hand could have been allowed with advantage and the office routine could have been made simpler ; work which has to pass through the hands of many secretaries and heads of departments might be dealt with more expeditiously. A beginning was made to bring this about, but

war-time is not a suitable time to introduce innovations. It is a point worth consideration whether the co-operation of a few first-class business men would not be effective in getting the best possible value for the millions of money that are controlled at this office. Brains of only average capacity, however, would be of no use, and it is doubtful whether the money could be found to pay for those of first-class calibre. They would have to take it up for love of the work itself.

This excess of work will gradually lessen after the conclusion of Peace, but its influence will be felt for a long time. The departments will have a lot of work to do before the army organisation, broken by the chaos of the present day, can be re-established, unless the dream of disarmament materialises. The signs of the times and the views of our enemies do not bear out any such expectations.

I took a civilian suit of clothes to a tailor for much-needed repairs ; he showed me some military breeches, quite new, which had been brought to him by discharged soldiers for alteration, and he told me that many of these men had three or four pairs each. It is the same thing everywhere. How the army authorities are ever going to get back the rifles which have been taken from the troops and are now being used in civil war will remain an insoluble problem. Loss through the guilt and folly of individuals can involve milliards of marks.

It has several times been suggested that a special ministry should be devoted to the work of looking after pensions, as this will be of first importance for many years to come, and is likely to increase rather than diminish. The question is one that must be carefully considered and not decided by sentiment. So long as such an office remained under the control of the military officials this might lead, not to simplification, but to difficulties and loss of time. The department of Maintenance and Justice has up to now dealt in an exemplary manner with all the needs of those who have suffered through the war.

An energetic attempt to establish an Air Department arose from personal wishes; it can only be successful if the Flying Corps is made a separate service, otherwise several departments will be working one against the other. According to what I hear an Air Ministry has been established as a government department. Whether it is to deal with the military side of flying I do not know. The Air Service should be left to develop independently, for we all have every reason for grinding our own axes. The following is an illustration which shows how careful one has to be when dealing with matters which are only understood by a few experts: The head of the Air Section had asked me to divide his section as it had grown too big for him to do the work alone. Such a division would, of course, mean the setting up of an Air Department. I called in an official of equal

standing from another office to ask his advice, and he was of opinion that the division was not necessary. When, however, after the departure of the Chief, I appointed him to this position it was quite another matter ; he would only accept the post on condition that the section was made a department. In the Reichstag a department was voted, and the subsequent course of events is in favour of this, if our enemies do not prohibit the development of the Air Service.

The difficulties of the situation as regards supplies were seriously felt by the administrative department. During the first years of the war provision was made in the first place for the fighting troops, and what was left over went to feed the people at home. This arrangement suited the military authorities much better than it did the civil departments. The military authorities were able to make their plans as to supplies for the whole year, while the civil departments, on the other hand, had to be content to make the best of what was left over. During the period of office of the Chancellor Michaelis this arrangement was changed ; the two sections, military and civil, were treated in the same way, and both lived from hand to mouth, for the crops were never really completely gathered in. The statistics that had been drawn up to estimate the yield of the crops were a complete failure. Years before, when I was a divisional commander on the General Staff, I had

brought forward time and again the proposal that something should be done to increase the yield of crops and the necessities of life, and that after the harvest the whole question should be dealt with, on the assumption that Germany would be cut off from the rest of the world on all sides. The proposal was turned down because the government departments have not enough power to carry it through, and because the cost of realising my suggestions was considered to be too high. Such a situation was thought to be quite out of the question.

Under these circumstances the Administrative Department was faced with a difficult task ; it was continually necessary to pacify its harassed officials. To this was added the further difficulty that in the cases of forcible requisitioning the military authorities had to carry out the duties of executioner. It followed from this that we were by no means popular with the agricultural classes. In addition there was friction with the officials of the Food Control office, for they had suspicions that the military authorities had still considerable stores in the background. This impression was perhaps due to our peace-time regulation, according to which it was necessary that our stores should always contain sufficient supplies to last over several months. As a matter of fact they were for the most part empty.

On the other hand, I am of the opinion that it is quite possible that the troops in the field did not,

and indeed could not, give a correct estimate of the supplies they had in hand. When I was a General Officer Commanding in the field I always found it a matter for self-congratulation when my troops were well furnished with supplies. In the field one finds oneself faced with all kinds of unexpected difficulties, which it is very hard to overcome, if one is handicapped by shortage of supplies.

Before the summer offensive I had a force of somewhere about seventy thousand men to provide for. During the fighting this number was increased to about half a million. If I had not had good stores of supplies how should I have been able to feed this mass of men, with a corresponding number of horses ? Later, when the control of supplies was taken out of the hands of the military authorities, emergencies of this nature had to be met by bringing up what was needed in every available means of transport that could be pressed into the service, and the demands on this were already very heavy. It cannot be wondered at that every now and again we found ourselves faced with difficulties of supply.

The army was particularly hard pressed in this respect in the year 1918. Any one who is aware of the situation with regard to supplies previous to the harvest of that year will also know that it was a question of getting full value out of the last grain of corn that could be found. All gratitude is due to the Commissioner for National Food Control, Herr von

Waldow, for the way in which he carried out his difficult and thankless task. Instead of this, as is the case with all unselfish and conscientious workers, he was the victim of mud-throwing. Though it is true that the military authorities were seriously handicapped by the placing of the civilian and military population on an equal footing as regards supplies, there is no doubt that this was the just and proper course to take. It would not have been any use having in the field an army sure of its supplies if the people at home were starving. It is to the conscientious labours of all those concerned that we owe the fact that in spite of all difficulties the troops were adequately fed. This does not mean, of course, that there were not individual cases of shortage and hardship during and after the fighting ; such cases have occurred always and in every war.

The department dealing with questions of accommodation has been very conspicuously in the public eye because of the problem of the disposal of prisoners. The task that fell to this department was a difficult one and called for a very tactful handling. For the most part the negotiations were carried out through the agency of neutral countries, who acted as intermediaries between ourselves and the enemy, and through them the wishes and suggestions of both sides were expressed. In this connection we had little dealing with neutral America. Spain showed herself very accommodating but she was inaccessible.

Most of our negotiations were carried on through Switzerland, Holland, Denmark and Sweden. We were often approached by the Vatican on behalf of French and Italian subjects, and even on behalf of English and Americans. I never came across any instance of intercession on behalf of German subjects. As there was a good deal of jealousy between the intermediaries, considerable care had to be exercised in dealing with them. The late General Friedrich carried through this task with skill and showed great tact in steering through the difficult places. We had also to enter into negotiations with the enemy on the question of the exchange of prisoners. In this respect the English proved to be the most reasonable. The French were at first disinclined to meet us, and afterwards they wavered according to the changes in the military situation. With the Russians it was very difficult to come to any understanding, for they were continually changing their minds and adopted a policy of procrastination. From the Americans we received no response at all to our advances.

Whatever lay within our powers we carried through conscientiously. That in spite of all our efforts there was still a good deal of dissatisfaction among our fellow-countrymen in the hands of the enemy who felt themselves deserted could not be avoided. These men did not realise that we were powerless to make ourselves felt in enemy countries.

Measures of reprisal were often adopted with success, but they will not accomplish everything, and every time they were adopted there was a risk of doing more harm than good ; on this question the Ministry for War did not always find itself supported by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

The Medical Department performed a noble task and carried it through with efficiency. Our Nursing Service for the sick and wounded has gained universal recognition. The public do not realise how necessary it was to exercise the greatest economy with the necessary medical stores. In this respect, too, our allies made great claims upon us. The hospitals which I have inspected in the field were above reproach. At home they were huddled together too much in the large towns where the stores required for their needs were more easily accessible. The life of idleness led by the wounded in these places did them no good ; in many cases the administration could with advantage have taken a broader view. I visited one convalescent home for officers in the field in which the patients complained of hunger ; the surgeon in charge was an eminent professor who had no experience of administration. The inspector referred to his instructions to justify himself, until I pointed out to him that a difference must be made between wounded and convalescents whom it was necessary to restore to health as quickly as possible.

In the battle of Serre in the summer of 1915 very good work was done by the motor ambulance column of a voluntary medical service ; at that time these vehicles were rare. By this means the wounded could be taken from the dressing station to the hospital train in less than half-an-hour, It is true that they had good roads at their disposal.

Many complaints have been heard, in the Reichstag among other places, of the apparently rough way in which men suffering from shellshock and other nervous complaints were dealt with. It is very difficult to arrive at any definite understanding on this point. If the course of treatment adopted by the surgeon is justified by results the patient's view should not be supported against the doctor, for at times the patients take up the most extraordinary point of view on these questions. In a hospital for the blind I came across an official of the Afforestation Service who had gone completely blind ; when treatment produced an unexpected improvement and he was able to distinguish a ray of light, he was not at all pleased, but was obsessed by anxiety lest he should lose his pension. In the majority of cases where the nerves were affected it was easy to be horrified and to come to a hasty and unjustified conclusion that things were not what they should be. One specialist estimated the number of cases of this nature at the strength of two army corps ; he qualified this statement, however, by saying that only in

a minority of cases was their condition the direct outcome of war conditions, but that in most cases they had broken down on their way into the firing-line, either during transport or immediately behind the front, as the result of some inherent weakness. To explain the large numbers of these cases he brought forward the argument that even in time of peace thousands go insane every year, which is naturally more noticeable in time of war.

How even intelligent orders can sometimes run counter to intelligent action is illustrated by the following case: There was on my staff an excellent specialist in hygiene ; before the war he had pursued research in the causes and treatment of typhus, in collaboration with a French doctor. This doctor was still living in the area which we were occupying. The German surgeon paid him a visit and brought away all his anti-toxine. With this he inoculated every man of the corps, beginning with the trenches. As a result of this we only lost two men from typhus at a time when the troops next to us were dying in large numbers from this disease ; his only reward was to receive a reprimand from his medical authority for not forwarding the anti-toxine to headquarters. I sent in his name for distinguished service. In my opinion both parties were right in this case. A certain well-known surgeon was in charge of a private hospital and was said to be obtaining good results in some particular type of case ; at any rate,

many patients were anxious to submit themselves to his treatment ; but he was in disagreement with some professors and an investigation into the whole matter was pending. This we had to take into account.

Complaints have been heard from time to time about the way in which the nurses were treated by the doctors. I never came across any justification for these complaints when I was in the field, but they have been since brought to my notice. The remedy for such cases as this must be left to the good breeding of the parties concerned ; it is essential that the selfless devotion to duty of the members of the Nursing Service should not be abused through the professional or personal bluntness of the surgeons.

The Dental Service has received but scant recognition ; it is important that this unfair state of things should be changed. While I was in France I had an excellent dental surgeon, to whom every facility was given. By his treatment of injuries to the jaw he helped many a wounded man to recover. But ordinary dentistry deserves to be given a more important place in the organisation of the army. In my intercourse with the men I have made a special point of observing their teeth, and I have been astonished at the number of cases of defective teeth that have come under my notice. A higher and permanent status must be given in the army to the dental surgeon, and this service must be organised

and administered by experts who will be competent to see to the provision of the necessary equipment and medical stores on scientific and economical lines.

These remarks are not in any way intended to detract from the reputation of the Medical Service. The efficiency with which this service did its work is sufficiently proved by the statistics of the wounded who have been restored to health and the success with which epidemics have been guarded against and dealt with.

The General War Department shows by its name its close connection with the war. The task of providing the army with weapons, ammunition and all sorts of equipment, of making good our losses in men, horses and material, as well as the organisation of fresh units and the reorganisation of those already in existence—all these were carried out by this department in co-operation with General Headquarters. It had to co-operate also with the civil officials of the Ministry for War.

It has been stated in the Reichstag that soon after the outbreak of the war a shortage of ammunition made itself felt, and that, in spite of this, the Ministry for War was issuing statements to the effect that we had enough for every possible contingency. These statements are both true and untrue. The requirements of the army with regard to ammunition were estimated beforehand on the basis of our experience in previous wars. During the Franco-

Prussian war there was several times a shortage of rifle ammunition, but there was never any lack of ammunition for the artillery; in this war the opposite was the case. The increase in the consumption of artillery ammunition had become noticeable during the war between Russia and Japan. We had before the war increased our stores of ammunition of both kinds, but there was a definite limit fixed. Just as it is impossible to lay in more than a certain quantity of food supplies, in the same way questions of economy, and the limit of time during which it can be kept, demand that only so much ammunition be kept in store as can always be kept in condition in peace-time by regularly making good the wastage. Modern artillery ammunition, with its fuses and delicate explosives, is very sensitive and soon perishes if it is kept in store.

No one had foreseen that during the war the consumption of artillery ammunition would or, indeed, could, be increased to a degree that exceeded what the endurance of the guns was considered to warrant. As it turned out we were, in fact, faced with a shortage of ammunition.

In 1914, when I held the appointment of Quartermaster-General, I watched with considerable anxiety the rapid dwindling of our ammunition supply. By dint of throwing into the scale all our available resources of labour our stock of shell-cases was before long brought up to such a high standard that we

actually had almost a superfluity. And yet it was to no purpose, for the explosives were lacking. The raw materials necessary for their manufacture were cut off by the blockade, and the production of nitrogen had not yet reached its full development.

What would have been the effect on the public *morale* if we had declared at that time that we had no more ammunition, and what use would the enemy have made of such a confession ? In cases like this the anxiety of the situation must be borne by the responsible authorities alone, and this is not the only case in which they have had to do so. To make public the actual state of affairs could only have worked harm.

The ammunition question has always turned on the supply of explosives. It was not a question of how many shell-cases could be turned out, but how many of these could be turned into effective ammunition with the available supply of explosives. The guns were found to be capable of standing a good deal more firing than had generally been expected. We knew that they would stand a good deal of hard use, but it has an effect on their efficiency. The presence of much-worn guns in a battery may ruin the accuracy of that battery's fire.

Means have been found by which this difficulty can be overcome ; in the case of each gun a record is kept of its history and the number of shots that it has fired. There are two ways of producing

uniformity: either a particular gun can be tested and the range of the others regulated accordingly, or each battery can be composed only of guns of about the same capacity. This is not, however, by any means easy to put into practice, for it means searching everywhere to find guns with similar records; they have to be brought from all parts and continually re-tested, as they deteriorate with further use. Nevertheless, the measures taken proved adequate. In spite of heavy losses through wear-and-tear and other causes, we have always maintained enough reserve artillery to make them good. In the case of some types of gun the reserves were so well in hand that as the Hindenburg programme went forward it was found possible to reduce their production and utilise the labour for the production of others of which there was greater need.

It must be remembered that all estimates based on the experience of former wars went by the board. Where once battles lasted a day or several days, they now went on for weeks and months, and in many places were continuous.

In the case of the men, too, their capacity to stand the strain of such battles exceeded anything that had been previously thought possible.

It was exactly the same in the case of the enemy; but he had all the resources of the world's markets at his disposal, while we had not only to supply ourselves but also our allies.

Members of the Reichstag who found fault with our inadequate supply of tanks showed themselves ignorant of the circumstances of the situation. In the battle of the Somme I was one of the first to have to stand up to these machines ; at that time the enemy had them only in small numbers, and they suffered from lack of speed. Soon afterwards we produced a tank capable of double the speed.

Both sides continued to vie with one another in the perfecting of this weapon. Our workshops could not, of course, keep pace with the enemy in the number produced, as the necessary material could not be spared ; it was needed for the manufacture of ammunition and guns. We had to devote ourselves to the production of means of defence against tanks. We already had at hand various devices which, with slight alteration, could be used for this purpose ; they were good, and justified the change as soon as the workmen became accustomed to their new job.

The fact is often overlooked that even in the most perfectly organised works any innovation involves loss of time. The only way in which this difficulty can be overcome is by equipping all available works in time of peace with machinery that can be immediately adapted to the requirements of war ; that, however, means burying capital, which must be guaranteed.

What we needed in the way of rifles and rifle

ammunition we either possessed already or were able to produce quickly.

The most urgent question was the raising of reserves of man-power. The disputes on this question will never be settled. G.H.Q. had hoped to be able to call on the Poles, the Ukraine and the Baltic Provinces, but as it turned out hardly a man was raised from these places. At first the Germans in the Ukraine promised to do a great deal, but it became evident later that they wanted all the men they could raise for their own protection. When in the year 1918 the matter became of vital importance, it was found that there were more than a million exempted men in the country. The suggestion was brought forward that the military age should be raised to fifty-six at a time when the discharge of the oldest classes had just been ordered. Such a contradictory measure would not have been understood in the country ; the oldest classes would be of very little use to the army, but they were very important for the economic side of the war, and, indeed, if the exempted men were called up to work on the land this work would depend entirely upon them.

I did not hesitate to offer these exempted men, even though the economic side of the war should suffer by their removal from their work. This could not be allowed to stand in the way if by this means the war could be brought to a successful

conclusion. The men who have remained at home until the last do not make strong reinforcements, but in a long war the standard is bound to decline as time goes on. The whole of these could not suddenly be called up all together, and the untrained among them took time to get into shape. This addition of strength could only be brought to bear gradually, and it would not be before the spring of 1919 that full use could be made of it—then the recruits of the new year would be available. The 600,000 men that my successor proposed to raise would have had to come from the same source. That would have reduced by half the strength of the men left to carry on the economic labour. This number was based on the assumption that the war industries would be willing to set free their workmen, and that in face of the universal shortage of labour.

We know what an outcry there was from industry and agriculture for labour. I have several times had expressed to me the suspicion that many workshops were in the habit of engaging more labour than they really needed; under the circumstances, however, they were all said to be willing to set men free. Unfortunately the summons to mobilise the whole man-power of the country was not given, and the mutiny of the navy destroyed the *morale* of the whole country.

The Central Department was charged with keeping me informed on all matters concerning the

careers and personal history of all men employed at the Ministry and elsewhere. In view of the heavy demand for officers and officials and the constant changes in the staff, which were the result of the return to their regiments of men who had recovered from wounds, this work was highly important and had to be carried on by reliable and responsible men.

Among the regiments it was very easy for an efficient officer to be marked down as suitable for work at the Ministry, for no special training or examination was required. These officers were then called up on probation and were given an opportunity to show what they could do. In spite of the great demand there was never any difficulty in finding suitable men. Of course, there was also a good deal of disillusionment and disappointment when men were rejected as being either unsuitable or too old. Experience has shown that the selection was made on right lines. Among the officials from other departments who were transferred to the Ministry for War for the period of the war several have asked to be retained permanently. They must therefore have found the work there congenial.

I never had any discord, with the exception of a mad letter from a civil servant, who did not give his name ; he accused me of not knowing my staff and threatened to blow up the Ministry. It is possible that the letter was the work of foreign agents. I took no notice of it.

The War Department I found already organised when I went to the Ministry. I should not myself have organised it on the same lines. On the one hand it was practically independent, and had in certain respects full powers over the command represented ; on the other hand it was subordinate to the Minister for War, in whom the ultimate responsibility was vested. This was an unsatisfactory situation. Further, many of its duties clashed with those of other departments of the Ministry, which led to unnecessary complication. One point that the war has again emphasised is that it takes considerable time before new departments can be got into smooth working order.

It is simpler and more satisfactory to graft on to and extend the organisations that already exist.

The War Department had the reputation among the members of the Reichstag of being very favourably disposed towards labour, and as a result of this it was very popular in these circles. In dealing with exemptions this department was at first inclined to be too lenient. Many cases were reported where men discharged from the army for work in the factories did not put in an appearance. Instead, they were travelling about or staying at home and doing nothing. This was not the purpose for which they had received their discharge from the army.

It was found very difficult to staff the offices of the district commands with experts who had a

knowledge of the requirements of the army, and at the same time understood the economic interests of the country. The War Department dealt successfully with some knotty problems; their example might with advantage be remembered in time of peace.

The work of the officers and officials of the Ministry for War is all the more deserving of commendation when it is remembered that in many cases it was carried on through periods of great scarcity. Many of them were actually suffering from starvation, yet they never failed in their duty. I shall always remember my colleagues with feelings of gratitude.

I was once asked whether, when I first came to the Ministry for War, I encountered difficulties or noticed instances of neglect that might be imputed to the negligence of my predecessors. This question I must answer in the negative. Of course, it must be admitted that we might have been better equipped, but this might be said of any army. The responsibility for this cannot be laid at the door of the Ministry for War.

Formerly I had had no opportunity of seeing the work of the Ministry except from the point of view of the General Staff. The General Staff regulates its requirements according to the strength of the enemy, and consequently they are more liable to be too heavy than too light. The Ministry for War

must, before taking action, come to an agreement with the Imperial Treasury as to means.

There a good deal of opposition has to be overcome. I have heard Moltke complain that the last time the strength of the army was increased, instead of the four new corps asked for only two were sanctioned, and part of these had already been raised. These corps were rejected by the Treasury under Wermuth. Had it been otherwise we could have made very good use of them during the war. With the man-power available we ought to have been able to raise more troops. It would also have been possible to lower the standard, as occurred during the war. Then every possible source was exploited, but a thorough training in peace-time would have increased their fighting value to a considerable extent.

I do not know for what reasons the regular trained reserve was given up; probably it was owing to the formation of so many new small units, but there were also other reasons for the step. The institution of the Two Years' Service and the raising of the standard of efficiency made too great a demand on the training staff. Part of this staff found themselves from April until the end of the manœuvres continually employed on parade grounds, shooting-ranges and all kinds of special training work. Those who were particularly lucky might find themselves in winter attached to a regiment under training.

That was difficult to keep up for any length of time. If in addition to this there were a body of recruits of the special reserve to be trained, the best of staffs could not but grow tired and stale. The result of the short period of training could not bear any proportion to the effort expended. The general reserve has been referred to continually in the Reichstag, probably in support of the shortened period of training.

Since we are limited by the necessity of keeping our demands within the scope of the means at our disposal we have to make the best of what we have.

The Imperial Treasury certainly has a difficult task to perform if it is to balance the various demands made upon it with the available grants. There is one thing, however, about which I was not satisfied. According to the custom that ruled during my period of office, the Minister had to cancel demands which he had himself submitted if the Treasury thought itself unable to provide the money. He was thus obliged to act against his better judgment. The Imperial Treasury was in a much better position to give the grounds on which the refusal was based.

When it comes to questions of estimates it is often very easy to get oneself into awkward situations. When I was a member of the General Staff, and in charge of the War Academy, I found that the required number of lecturers on military subjects

had been provided for in the estimates for years back, but the Treasury had refused to sanction their appointment. The lectures and instruction were carried on by officers of the General Staff in addition to their ordinary duties. I myself, in addition to my work as a General Staff officer, found myself obliged to give instruction in three departments of the War Academy, and this I found a heavy burden. Nevertheless, I was in favour of this method of instruction and opposed to its being put in the hands of the instructors provided for by the estimates, because the instruction given by an officer of the General Staff is the direct outcome of his staff service and so likely to be of greater value.

I was able to bring Count Schlieffen to agree with my view of this question. He had previously followed the advice of the directors of the Academy. When the new proposals on the lines of my advice were drawn up and submitted to the Ministry for War the Ministry declared itself unable to fall in with them as the Treasury had that year confirmed the appointment of the instructors provided for in the estimates, and it was thought that if new proposals were substituted the Treasury would have good grounds for saying that we did not know what we wanted. This would have created further difficulties when subsequent demands were put forward; so the instructors were appointed during my period of office, in spite of the fact that I was opposed to the

measure. In these matters there arise often the same contradictions that affect all human affairs.

The sphere of the Minister for War was often seriously hampered by certain war regulations, particularly that dealing with martial law. The difficulties of his office have not been diminished by the addition to his duties of the control of the censor and police.

The publications of the censor were not issued by the Minister for War. They were the work of all the departments together. The Minister for War could not alter them in any way ; all he could do was to decide whether they were sufficiently discreet or not.

In the case of the police there was a good deal of confusion and overlapping of civil and military law. This was what a good many people failed to understand. I grant it was difficult to find a clear course. In the territory occupied by our armies doubtful people were from time to time arrested, as opportunity occurred, by one of our commanding officers. Later it would occur that this officer moved on somewhere else and the prisoner was forgotten ; this gave rise to several cases of hardship.

In war, however, hard cases always occur and must be borne for the good of the majority. Other people are even shot. Our unfortunate fellow-countrymen in the area occupied by the enemy have a harder lot to bear to-day than at that time.

The department controlling the war Press also

led to difficulties, although it was not placed, as it should have been, under the direct control of the Minister for War.

So long as the Minister was at General Headquarters it was not difficult for the military departments to settle the questions regarding the Press in co-operation. It can be understood that the Minister who remains a soldier, and not a civil servant as the Inland Revenue office would have liked him to be, must take a part in the conduct of the war. But he must bow to necessity. During his absence his place had to be taken by a deputy minister ; that led to countless difficulties. The position of deputy was always a hampered and thankless one. Of course, it might be necessary from time to time that the Minister should be at General Headquarters. In that case he had no alternative but to go, but for the most part his duties required his presence at his Ministry.

When I was attached to General Headquarters I once said to von Falkenhayn, who was at that time Minister for War, that his place was in Berlin. At that time I had no idea that I should one day occupy the position, but I am still of the same opinion.

In any case, the Minister for War in Berlin would have been in a better position to control the war Press than any other Minister. The war Press was in itself not sufficient to keep the people at home enlightened as to the course of events and to keep

them of stout heart; what was required was an Imperial Press office.

Such an office as this was never established during the war. Each State department worked for its own interests regardless of the others. Many attempts have been made to fill this need, but they have never come to anything.

At a time when the Press of our enemies had long been smothering us with printer's ink, and a serious need had arisen at home for enlightenment and encouragement, a Chief of the Press was appointed. I once asked him how it was that one never noticed the result of his activities; in reply he complained of the difficulties with which he found himself confronted on all sides and of the contradictory orders with which his work was hampered. Under such circumstances it is very difficult for any one to take an independent course. The Government must have been responsible for the existing situation.

There was one thing with which I was particularly struck during my period of office at the Ministry for War. Any question that in the remotest way concerned the Reichstag or its members was regarded and dealt with exclusively from this point of view. This is probably the result of long years of precedent and co-operation. I, on the contrary, set my face against this way of looking at things and did my best to treat all questions that came under my consideration strictly from the point of view of

fact. I had to learn by experience that this was a thankless task.

Consciously and unconsciously the idea of establishing an Imperial War Ministry was gaining ground. Even individual colleagues of mine brought forward suggestions which supported this scheme without realising it. I always, however, placed myself on the side of the Constitution.

In general the Reichstag was favourably disposed to the Ministry for War. This feeling, however, did not extend itself to the Minister. I have often consoled myself with the words of old Payer who, after he became a member of the Government, said that from that position things took on quite a different aspect from what they presented to the outsider. Those who now hold the reins of government will experience the same thing.

It is my belief that the Ministry for War has always honestly striven to do everything that lay within its power to ensure the efficiency and readiness of the army and to provide for the safety of the country. It is only natural that enquiries should be made as to the causes of our failure, but they are to be sought in quite other places than those that have been generally indicated. The Ministry for War need fear no investigation into its conduct of the war.

The enquiry has been placed in the hands of a commission of scholars and experts. I pointed out to the president, Professor Sering, that it was the

duty of the commission to hear without prejudice the evidence of all who had worked at the Ministry. There are bound to be contradictions in the evidence of the military and non-military. The military chiefs should be given an opportunity of placing their views before the commission. My object was to avoid the danger of a one-sided conclusion and to give every opportunity of throwing all the light possible on the question.

CHAPTER VII

THE REICHSTAG

BEFORE my appointment as Minister for War I had been in the Reichstag on two occasions. The first time I heard Prince Bismarck speak when the Socialist Bill was passed. One incident that impressed itself particularly on my memory was the speech of a delegate from Poland. Waving his arms and twisting his body with excitement, he shouted: "I would rather suffer one tyrant, Prince Bismarck, than many tyrants, the Social Democrats." The other occasion was the day on which Prince Bülow failed to find words to defend his imperial master.

Constitutional assemblies will never have the dignity that distinguished the old Roman senate, which might be compared to a congress of kings. But, nevertheless, dignity ought to be maintained. President Fehrenbach received a significant rebuff when he attempted a serious violation of the dignity of the Reichstag.

One day, at their own request, I took my daughters with me to witness a sitting of the House. One of them came back disillusioned, and said to me:

"But, father, the members did not behave at all well. An old man with a long white beard was standing on a platform and kept on ringing a bell and shouting, and no one took the slightest notice of him. They began to walk about and talk to one another and didn't listen." It was a naïve criticism, but many visitors to the Reichstag have been struck with the same thing.

I, too, have often felt indignation at the behaviour of the House. I have often felt sympathy for the *Berichterstatter* (reader of the report) when I heard him read his report as quickly as possible, and quite unintelligibly, knowing all the time that no one was listening to a word he said. I have also forced myself at long sittings and during long speeches to follow everything that was said, and found it tiring work. I have been even more astonished while the House was in committee to see every one suddenly get up and dash out. When in my astonishment, I asked some one what was the matter, the answer I received was: "Old X. is speaking now. He always has a lot to say; there is no need to listen to him; it is much better to go and have some lunch."

Long speeches are certainly tedious to listen to, and not by any means the best; but the art of making short, concise speeches is rarely practised in the Reichstag. I have never been able to understand the weakness so many people have for hearing their own voices. In the Reichstag much of interest

often goes on without attracting any attention. This I found all the more remarkable, as the members are very jealous and very sensitive, particularly in respect to the members of the Government.

These members of the Government have to listen to the most outrageous remarks about themselves and their work, and it would be very deeply resented if they tried to defend themselves in the same way. That is not playing the game. On the other hand, compliments and flattery always receive a favourable hearing.

During the war, long sittings of the Reichstag interfered seriously with my work at the Ministry for War. As, however, all representatives of Government departments had to be present, so as to be able to supply information asked for without delay, all other work had to wait, which was often a very serious matter when urgent business for the army required immediate attention. This could only be remedied by working far into the night.

The first important business in the Reichstag in which I took part dealt with the National Service Bill which was brought in during the late autumn of 1916. At the first reading of the Bill I had spoken against a National Service Act, as I thought the situation would be more suitably met by the issue of an edict from the Emperor. It was, however, plainly pointed out to me that if I persisted in the standpoint I had taken up I should make my position

a very awkward one, and in any case I should find myself faced with all kinds of difficulties when it came to the debate on the next Army Estimates. At that time I was still under the impression that the question would be decided on its merits.

The Government Bill in its first draft was concise and clear, but many subsidiary clauses would have to be added before the Act could be put into practice. The Reichstag rejected the Bill. Scheidemann said at the time that its poisonous fangs would have to be pulled out. It was the attitude of the Reichstag that provided the poison. When I say this I am not speaking of the party advantages which this attitude aimed at winning ; I am thinking of a much more important thing—the harm which the rejection of the Bill did to the army. The result, as it turned out, satisfied no one. The effect on the troops of this Act was to make them discontented and restless. Our men on leave at home had already looked with an envy, which can well be understood, at those who had been exempted from military service and were engaged on comfortable jobs at home, and they had compared the position of these men with their own hard lot. These men from the trenches could not understand why the people who were working at home, on the lines of communication and behind the front, should be drawing high wages while they themselves, with their much harder and more dangerous work, or even with work of exactly the same

nature, should have to be satisfied with their army pay. This gave rise to much bad feeling and had a most insidious effect on the *morale* of the army.

Soon after the war broke out it had come to my notice that the men on leave were greatly influenced by their friends who had been exempted for various reasons. These men boasted of their much higher wages and jeered at the men from the front for being such fools as to accept the comparatively low rate of pay that they were getting in the army. I communicated at the time with the Ministry for War on this subject, and submitted that the only way of getting over this unsatisfactory state of things was to regard all men of military age, whether fit for service or not, who were not serving with the army as combatants, as being on war service, and paying them at the same rates as the army.

The measure that gave rise to the greatest interest and excitement in the Reichstag was the question of the suffrage in Prussia, although constitutionally this had nothing to do with the Reichstag. But this trespassing into spheres that were altogether beyond the scope of its authority was unfortunately allowed to go unchecked by the Government.

I have been told that my attitude on this question caused efforts to be made to have me removed from my office. Whether this was the case or not I cannot say with certainty; I am opposed to class

suffrage, but I am equally strongly opposed to universal suffrage.

I understand too little of the laws of the different kinds of suffrage to venture on a considered opinion as to which is the best or the most equitable. It is quite probable that none of them is really satisfactory. The reason on which I based my opposition was that I did not consider a time when the German people was engaged in a struggle on which its very existence depended a suitable moment for dealing with such a far-reaching question as an alteration of the suffrage. It was preposterous to choose a time when so large a part of the country's manhood was away from home. Such questions as this should not be arranged for them in their absence. It was a matter in which they were closely interested, and it was only right that they should be given the opportunity of taking part in the discussion of the question and helping towards its settlement.

As it is, they have returned to find their country in a state of turmoil. The real reason for this overhasty method of dealing with the suffrage question has been well expressed by the words of a well-known political leader : " What we don't succeed in getting now we shall never get at all."

It is true that in politics success depends on seizing opportunities, but when this is done at a time when the nation is struggling for its life, it is nothing more or less than blackmail.

Politics of a far-reaching and nobly-conceived type the Reichstag was very little concerned with. What went by the name of politics among these people was for the most part the petty politics of party, from which the German politician seems unable to free himself.

Scheidemann once said, when the question of national education was before the House, that many private soldiers knew more about politics than their officers who were supposed to educate them. It is perfectly true that many of our regular officers were absolutely ignorant of all that concerned politics; it was their duty as servants of the State to hold themselves aloof from these matters. At the same time, the most noble ambition of all—to save their country—was nearer to their hearts than was the case with the most skilful party politician, who saw everything in terms of party politics and overlooked what was really vital. One cannot cease to wonder at the large number of people with pretentions to acuteness who accept the statements and attitude of the enemy at their face value. A little knowledge of history and human nature would have led them to take quite another view.

The famous revolution of July, 1917, was a very serious political mistake. When the report of it reached the capitals of England and France people rubbed their hands with satisfaction and told one another with a grin: "Now it will soon be all up

with them." This conviction spurred the enemy on to make fresh efforts.

Nevertheless, the revolution did great harm to our people. Every one interpreted it in a different way ; many shirked it, and no one dared to expose its true nature even when some of its former supporters backed out. It had once more developed into a true German "principle." For such a principle the German will do anything, no matter how foolish or how ruinous.

There is, of course, no doubt that with many it was a case of genuine conviction, but this did not make it any the less political stupidity. It was plain from the beginning that this war was not a war of annexation, but a war of defence. All wishes and hopes to the contrary which were expressed in some quarters were exaggerated by the enemy and played a part in his success.

To repeat continually the protestations of our peaceful intentions was merely to arouse the enemy's suspicions, for in their case, too, it must be remembered that their assertion of the treachery and untrustworthiness of Germany was not always merely deliberate slander, but might to some extent be based on actual conviction.

Far too little has been made of the effect which this peace revolution had on our troops at the front. Its unsettling influence made itself felt all along the line. I remember speaking over the telephone at

the time with an officer belonging to a regiment that was once under my command. He said : " I have been a good democrat all my life, but now I feel I should like to be a lieutenant with ten men charged with the duty of sending the Reichstag to the devil."

We had not learned to hold our tongues. Great measures mature best in silence. It is not wise to anticipate future events ; the wise course is to make sure of the ground so that when the right time comes vigorous action can be taken. I have on several occasions taken the liberty of pointing out that the first thing to aim at was to bring the war to a conclusion, and that this was the end on which all our attention and all our efforts should be concentrated. When that was done, and not till then, we should be in a position to consider the further possibilities of the situation. What a lot of trouble and labour has been expended in dealing with the situation after the war before it was over ! All this has been in vain, and nothing remains but shame and humiliation.

I have always held, and still hold, the opinion that it is not possible to make all policy public. The talk about the League of Nations has not affected my opinion. As soon as it suits their purpose to do so, our enemies and other states will continue to make secret treaties, even if it is only done by word of mouth. If we remain innocent enough to believe all that is said we shall continue to be deceived.

During the session of the second Hague Convention (1907) I asked the president, Geheimrat Kriege : " What security have we that the decisions of the Convention will be adhered to ? " He replied almost angrily : " No one can draw back, not even England." Recent events must have given him cause to change his opinion.

Apart from the mistakes which were the outcome of genuine conviction, there were others that were simply the result of ignorance. How often has the statement been made that the only people who had an interest in going on with the war were the officers and the wealthy classes ! This blatant attempt to arouse agitation against the war soon got a hold on the people, and its effects were even noticeable in the Reichstag. No one can find pleasure in a long war. Poor and rich men and officers all bear their share in the common burden of sacrifice. That was enough to make it to everybody's interest to bring the war to an end.

I have only once met an officer in the field who actually said that as far as he was concerned he did not care if the war lasted five years. I might also mention in this connection that a private soldier, a waiter in civil life, said they could go on for years yet, as they were living well and, after all, there were risks to be faced even at home. Neither of these opinions can be taken seriously ; every one was longing for peace. Peace, however, is not to be brought about by revolution, talking and wishing ;

it can only be won by action. It must have made a strange impression on the outside world when it was found necessary to repeat again and again in the Reichstag that it was impossible to bring about peace without negotiating with the enemy. In order to make negotiations possible it is first necessary that both parties should be willing to negotiate. The enemy had left no doubt at all that they had no desire to effect peace by negotiation : they had made up their minds that peace must be dictated. Now on all sides one hears wailing over lost opportunities for the negotiation of peace. This can do no good ; it only means the making of excuses and accusations, for which no proof can be produced. If it is true that the statement was made by Erzberger that he could bring about peace in half an hour, the events that have followed the signing of the armistice must have undeceived him. Maliciously disposed people will always find satisfaction in connecting his name for all time with the shameful conditions that are being imposed.

The Reichstag has shown itself devoid of all understanding of the politics of war and peace. The speeches of the American President, Mr. Wilson, had befogged their minds. The parties of the Right have made many political mistakes, it must be admitted, but in these matters, at least, they showed themselves possessed of a sure judgment, based on an experience and an understanding of human nature.

There has never been, nor ever will be, a case where a victorious enemy has shown himself disposed to waive the advantages of his position and negotiate with his vanquished opponent on equal terms. It is impossible to understand how intelligent people can allow themselves to be persuaded into such an idea. I have often noticed that those who make speeches are not in the habit of setting out their reasoning and from it deducing their conclusions ; they generally produce the conclusion first and make their reasoning fit in accordingly. Such a method of argument is bound to result in self-deception.

A striking feature of the Reichstag was that the most brilliant and inspired orators were always led away by their powerful imaginations. The most admirable champion of Middle Europe was one of these. It seemed such a simple matter to cut out the tempting middle of the great European cake, particularly as it was the territory of the Allies and opened the way to the East.

I do not pretend to have any profound knowledge of the peoples who occupy this territory. What I have had the misfortune to learn of them, in the course of business and the duties of my profession, has not given me any cause for enthusiasm. But the leader of the Social Democratic party has the gift of inspiring oratory that carries his hearers away with him. I wonder what he thinks now of the

glories of the future state. So much of the earthly paradise of which such men dream is impossible, for the reason that we cannot get beyond human nature and earthly conditions.

Judging from the speeches of the Government and the party politicians, it would appear that they themselves are gradually coming to realise that this is the case, for now these pictures of the imagination must give way to the reality, and the people who have so long been hypnotised by these dreamers are beginning to cry out more and more for truth. The treading of this path upon which they have now set foot will bring the nation a good deal of healthy disillusionment.

Many of these orators called to mind the parody : " If you have a constituency thank God and be content." But it is not enough to have a constituency ; it is important that a politician should take care to maintain and extend his influence. It is difficult to do this without indulging in unrealities. The main part of political influence is not based on fact. It is so much easier to move men by appealing to their human weaknesses, their desires and their passions.

The grievances of the men in the field offered a great opportunity for this method. If you were to take ten million people in peace-time and ask them what were their grievances, you would find them add up to a good round sum. If you take these same

ten million men and transfer them to the changed and disagreeable conditions of active service in the field, the number of their grievances will not decrease but will grow. As the army is a human institution it will be found that a large number of the grievances are sure to be well grounded, but that does not make it any the less necessary that they should be thoroughly investigated and proof established that they really are justified.

In the Reichstag, however, the cases of grievance and hardship were accepted at their face value without any pretence at investigation of the circumstances. I have myself had too large an experience of these matters to be in any danger of falling into the same mistake. Apart from this, it is also a mistake to assume that it is always possible to obviate even well-founded causes of complaint by simply issuing orders and prohibitions. Most of them are the result of mistakes, which nothing short of a generation of education could hope to prevent.

In war-time there are bound to be many hardships which nothing can prevent. An impression had arisen in many quarters that it was possible to weigh and decide each individual case as is done at home under peace conditions—a view of the situation which shows an absolute lack of understanding of the grim realities of war. Any officer who has observed the condition of the men under him after they have come through a period of heavy fighting and great

exertion, knows what their mental and moral condition is under such circumstances. They are physically exhausted and their mental and moral condition is one of high tension. They snarl at one another for the merest trifle and are in a highly sensitive and touchy state. At a time like this there is always plenty of grousing, which after a few days of rest is in many cases forgotten, though in others the grievance still rankles in the mind.

The over-exhaustion of the troops is only one instance: there are in time of war many combinations of circumstances that afford a fertile soil for the rapid growth of grievances and complaints. One other particularly striking instance is the long imprisonment of men of all types and classes who are cooped up together in the military hospitals. For these reasons it is always necesary to take all the circumstances into consideration before forming a judgment as to how far a complaint is well grounded.

It is quite another matter if the root of the matter is to be found in breach of duty or in crime. In such cases as this it is necessary to deal with the matter without delay and with the most relentless severity. I have often wished the threats that have been issued from time to time, that all military offences would be brought up and tried after the end of the war, had been carried into practice. If that had been done it would have been possible to establish a distinction between the false and the true.

As it is, there does not seem to be the slightest grounds for supposing that this will ever be done. Before any such action is possible it will first be necessary to re-establish right and justice. The practice that has been so continually indulged in of inviting the statement of grievances from the men on active service, and then making their statements public, has been the cause of a great deal of harm. Such action has simply resulted in the encouragement of flabbiness and softness.

To the same category belong the persistent efforts that have been made in certain quarters to modify the punishment that has been inflicted for military offences. Such a course of action is contrary to all experience of war, but is always popular with the mass of the people. It is quite true to say that the longer a war lasts the more strictly must discipline be maintained. I have myself supported the remission of slighter offences, in certain particular cases, out of consideration for the abnormal circumstances of war, but I have never taken any steps to stand in the way of the infliction of severe punishments for serious offences.

With what jubilation the news was received that the Emperor Charles had abolished the field punishment of binding to a tree or gun-carriage, and what an act of mercy and clemency it was said to be! The good people are not aware that it was only too soon after this that Austria found herself obliged to

re-institute in secret the method of punishment by which the man was shut up in a cell in which he was unable to stand upright. Nor was this enough: frequent use had to be made of the death penalty.

These measures, however, came too late in the day to save the discipline of the Austrian army. In the brochure that has been brought out by the Social Democrats to show what blessings the army owes to their good offices there will be found among other things that the Social Democratic party abolished the punishment of tying up in face of the opposition of the Minister for War.

There is no foundation for this assertion. It was I who abolished this punishment; the Social Democratic party would have had no authority to do such a thing. It is difficult to come to a decision as to whether it is possible to do without this form of punishment or not. It is absolutely essential that offences against discipline should be punished by some method that can be carried out immediately. But how is it possible in the trenches, or immediately after an engagement, for a sentence of imprisonment to be carried out when there is no room adapted for the purpose anywhere near?

In spite of the earnest advice to the contrary of many soldiers of experience, as, for example, Field-Marshal von Hindenburg, I decided in favour of the abolition of this form of punishment, because in many parts of the army it had already been forbidden by

the commanders, and because several cases had been brought to my notice where men, immediately after being subjected to it, had taken their own lives.

On the other hand, I have on several occasions ordered officers to use their arms in dealing with mutinous subordinates and in extreme cases have sanctioned the infliction of the death penalty.

It has been recognised from the earliest times that insubordination is almost always the result of too great leniency in the remission of punishment. The only effective means by which it can be obviated has, from the time of the Roman consuls down to the rule of Marshal Foch, been found to be the strictest carrying out of the disciplinary code.

The members of the Reichstag, or the majority of them, at all events, have shown very little grasp of the importance of these things, and by their misguided readiness to give way to the wishes and clamouring of the masses they have done a great deal of harm to the army. Their proper course would have been to tell the men that in time of war it is necessary to put up with a lot of inconvenience and hardship, but instead of this they encouraged them to air their grievances. When, as a result of this, things came to a crisis, there was a sudden outcry for the members of the Reichstag to go to the front to appeal to the men and explain to them their duty to the country ; but it was too late, things had gone too far to be remedied.

The German people have had to suffer a great deal from the fact that its representatives have never shown themselves capable of marching resolutely forward towards the goal that was set before them and before their country, though at the beginning of the war everything gave reason to hope that this would not be the case. The interests of party, and the eagerness to grasp every possible advantage that could be squeezed from their country's need, brought about the final disaster.

In the case of the Social Democrats it is possible that they may have been influenced by fear of their big bad brothers the Independents. In any case it led them into the most extraordinary behaviour. The military state departments were called on by one of their supporters to prevent the holding of a meeting of metal workers, in which it was probable that the Social Democrats would be driven into a corner by the Independents. And what is more, the meeting was prohibited. This had the unexpected result of bringing Scheidemann to make a heated attack on the Government.

Such a method of conducting politics is not calculated to produce a favourable impression or to inspire trust. The Government were obsessed by the fear of a general strike. This was the bogey that was held over their heads: the leaders of the movement made it appear that if the Government did not give way before this or that demand they

could not be answerable for maintaining their authority over the masses. The Centre party has a good deal to answer for before the German people for its conduct in giving its support to the Social Democratic party, in spite of the fact that it was in a position to bring about quite different decisions. This line of conduct will do the Centre party no good in the long run. On the other hand, it is not to be wondered at that the Democratic Progressive party should have placed itself in line with the Social Democrats. These two parties have always had interests in common, and the Democratic Progressive party has not yet risen out of the ranks of the Philistines. They have never been able to take a lofty view of the power and greatness of politics, and have been carried away by the wild talk about world citizenship.

The proper course would have been for all parties to come out in support of the army. But even their dealings with questions concerning the army did not bring them together, but only served to widen the gulf between them. The successes of the armies always received recognition, for the reason that if it had been otherwise deep resentment would have been expressed by the people. But in voicing this recognition of the army's services some members were at pains to confine their praise to the men in the ranks, others to the officers, particularly those of the reserve. Only a few showed their gratitude for the

services of the regular officer, to whom the greatest share of the credit was due for the efficiency and leading of the army. Officers and men both belong to the same body; neither can get on without the other. It would therefore have been more fitting to speak of them as a whole.

Considerable time and attention were taken up, and widespread interest aroused, by the question of the limitation of freedom that was the inevitable consequence of the proclamation of martial law. The debates on this question gave rise to a good deal of misunderstanding and hard words. In this case we might have followed with advantage the example of the enemy countries. With them there was no question of toleration. Everything had to give way which appeared to be contrary to the interests of the community.

To what an extent judgment was warped in this country is shown by the discussion aroused by Harden's "Zukunft." In this publication Harden had done his best to further the interests of the enemy and had vilified the German nation and particularly everything that was Prussian. Our enemies might have employed him as counsel to plead their cause. It was therefore found necessary to suppress "Zukunft," and with good reason. Nevertheless, it found men to champion its interests. Heine, a member of the Reichstag, asked me to repeal the suppression of the publication, and gave as his

reason that such a step would make a good impression abroad, for our enemies would see that we were not afraid to tolerate the expression of the freest opinions.

What a lack of knowledge of affairs is displayed in such an opinion ! Our enemies would have been only too delighted to see us committing such foolishness. They themselves were in the habit not only of suppressing pamphlets and newspapers but of suspending and prosecuting their authors and editors if they published the slightest thing that did not suit them. It is only a German who will bring himself to harm his own cause for the sake of a pet principle. In comparison to the state of affairs in other countries there was already too much freedom in Germany. It is possible that after hearing the speeches of Harden, after our collapse, Herr Heine realises that his pleading on behalf of this gentleman was a mistake.

It was the same with the pacifists. For them, too, the Reichstag fought and wrangled as over a precious possession. The members could not be made to see the insidious, emasculating effect these men were working on the soul of the nation. I have read many pacifist publications which seemed quite intelligent ; they treat the subject scientifically, philosophically, and from the point of view of statesmanship or religion, but they have always borne the stamp of unreality, a want of grasp of practical affairs. There is no appreciation of the

most important factor of all—human nature. I once received a visit from a pacificist, Professor Quidde, who came to show me that they were not quite so crack-brained as one might have been led to suppose. I told him that I am in the habit of judging men according to their actions. All the information we possess of the history of mankind from the earliest times shows that human nature has altered little. It is only necessary to read the Old Testament. All the heights and depths, all good and evil—in short, everything that goes to make up the human creature, can be found there just as it is to-day. Civilisations change, but man remains always the same. To-day I might add that the same men who have caused, and are still causing, all the trouble in Berlin might have done the same in Babylon, Rome or Paris.

Quidde admitted the truth of what I said, and even went so far as to say that the pacificists no longer thought it possible to realise their aims in the immediate future, though they thought it possible to do so in a hundred or, perhaps, a few hundred years. I replied that on that point we were more nearly in agreement, and that it was possible that we might find ourselves both in accord with the conclusion of Kant, who also placed the end of war in the distant future which to him seemed so far off as to be indistinguishable from infinity.

Our pacificists are, however, by no means all

harmless people. I once read a letter I had received from one of them to Prince Hohenlohe. In this letter the writer openly says that he had been mortally afraid lest we should win the war in the summer of 1918.

Another, and a professor in a Prussian technical college at that, showed his lack of patriotism even more plainly, going so far as to preach the annihilation of Prussia. Even the education of our children has been exploited in the attempt to saturate the people with pacificism. When that was once accomplished we should be ripe for slavery or ruin, and what rejoicing there would be among our enemies!

It is difficult to understand the attitude of mind of people who can work in this way against their own interests and those of their country. Perhaps the conditions imposed by the enemy have had a sobering and disillusioning effect. But it is characteristic of the German people to hold to the point of view they have once taken up, even when the waves are rising round them and threatening to submerge them. If this were not so it must be plain to all that this peace bears in its very nature the seeds of future war as no peace has ever done in the past.

It seems to be inherent in the development of the world that at certain periods old values should go by the board to give place to new. This seems a necessary process to the continuance of life and activity. Perhaps it is in this sense that ancient wisdom saw

in war the father of all things. I have no faith in the belief that a world tribunal can maintain peace, quite apart from the very difficult question of the executive power that must stand behind it if it is to be in a position to compel peace, which in itself would involve war. There are certain things which it is impossible to decide by arbitration. When the life and death of a nation are hanging in the balance, as is the case with us to-day, no court of arbitration will be able to persuade it that it is best for the others that it should go under.

Many years ago an important business man said to me that if we could maintain peace for another hundred years we could have killed England. The only reply I could make was to ask him if he thought England was likely to keep quiet during the hundred years and watch our progress. The answer to this question has now been given beyond all doubt.

There are still nations on the earth that are in an undeveloped state. Are these to be allowed no chance of development ? Are they to be content to serve the purpose of the others ?

A short time ago I overheard some soldiers discussing the negroes, with whom they had had good opportunities of becoming acquainted in the course of the war. One of them said quite decidedly : " Some day they will come to the top."

If I remember rightly, it was at a conference of the Churches at Byzantium that the Goths were

refused permission to take part because they were barbarians and wild animals. To-day these Germanic peoples rule the world.

I was once told by a highly-placed colonial official that the invention of the machine-gun had made the rising of savage and subject peoples an impossibility. Recent events in this country have shown how quickly these weapons can change hands.

I do not take the view expressed by old Moltke that perpetual peace is not the beautiful dream it is said to be. I do, however, maintain that it is impossible so long as we remain human beings. Many nations have sought to realise it in the past and have talked of the Lost Paradise, the Golden Age, and similar dreams. Christianity and many other religions believe that it will come in the future, but only after the destruction of earthly man by death. In every case perpetual peace appears in the dark ages of the past, or in the dim eras of a distant future when the human race is no longer human. A man is only at peace with himself after long years of severe inward struggle, through self-denial and self-suppression. In the same way the nations will only attain peace through war. Even an unsuccessful war leads finally to peace or annihilation. Those who must go through the ordeal have to sacrifice themselves in order to secure for those who follow them whatever there is to save.

At the time of the collapse of our country I heard

a man in a high position break out with these words : " To think that we should live to see such a disaster ! " There is in these words something of egotism. If the disaster had to come, we must bear it like men and not give way to selfish wishing that it should have fallen to the lot of another generation than ours, for it is in our generation that the fault of weakness lies that made us unable to stave off the disaster.

Our enemies profess to be about to ensure international peace, and as a first step towards producing this result they intend to destroy Germany. The first duty that lies before us is to shake ourselves free from the influence of the pacificists ; set ourselves in every way possible to realise that to live is to fight both for individuals and nations. England offers us an example that is worthy of attention as to how to set about conquering the world. The only way in which it can be done is by ruthless selfishness. Everything that stands in her way she treads under her feet. All means are justified that will attain the end she has in view. Nothing that can be used to further her policy is considered wrong, even though it be a crime.

I remember when I was very young a friend of mine who was interested in missionary work told me about a great missionary conference in England at which there were also many officers present. He turned to me—I was a young lieutenant at the time

—with the question : " Why is that not possible in our country ? " To-day if I were asked the same question I should reply : " The English regard even missionary work in the first place as a means towards the attainment of world dominion, and for that reason it attracts general interest. The way in which they have behaved towards our missionaries in this war shows that the real motive of their zeal for this work is not what they profess it to be."

I do not for a moment intend to hold up England's behaviour in all matters as a pattern for us to follow. All I want is to ask the pacificists where they think their efforts will lead us in the face of such ambitions ?

There were also in the Reichstag supporters of the International party and of Bolshevism who seemed to be getting more closely allied. They did not, however, let this appear openly. The Social-Democratic party allowed themselves to be grossly deceived by the international coalition. The Britisher, the American, and most other nationalities, think first of themselves and their own interests. No one but a German could go on living in the belief that the interests of all communities in the world are one and the same. Many a Social Democrat is not in a position to think internationally. The very battle-cry, " Proletarians of all countries unite ! " will not please him, for the ordinary worker is not a proletarian. They all regard capital as their enemy.

Here, too, it is possible that their views will change as they come to realise that capital is necessary to their existence. In the furtherance of their socialistic campaign they will meet with many unpleasant experiences, for it will bring them no gain.

If I remember right, the Government of New Zealand is socialistic. The only way it can be kept going is through continual help from England. The State is therefore hopelessly insolvent.

The Independents have allied themselves with the Bolsheviks. They are associated with the Bolshevik 'ambassador" in Berlin, and at a banquet that was held at the Russian Embassy a toast was drunk to the success of internationalism. The name of Cohn, the representative in the Reichstag for Nordhausen, has been particularly connected with this incident. It was openly stated in the newspapers that he had received millions of marks from Russia. According to his own account, these were to be used for the benefit of the Russian prisoners; according to Joffre they were for the purpose of propagating Bolshevism. That foreign money also has played a part in the mutiny in the navy it is safe to assume. Threads have been traced connecting the first naval mutinies with the Independent party. Imperial Chancellor Michaelis and Secretary of State von Capelle in the Reichstag accused them of being a party to the mutinies, but unfortunately without bringing forward sufficient evidence to

prove their accusations, so that they did not succeed in winning the support of the House.

International relations have existed from the earliest times. They were necessary for the carrying on of trade and barter. They have been cultivated through the medium of princes, noblemen, scholars, artists, commercial agents, financiers and travellers. But this communication was limited within the membership of certain national communities. The people who have been most free from such limitations are the financiers and the Jews, who seem very frequently to have interests in common. There are, however, exceptions.

Among the great religious movements Christianity has set before itself the task of spreading its influence throughout the length and breadth of the world. Other religions too, have had the same ambition. But even these religious movements have found themselves obliged to allow for national individuality and have not attained a complete internationality.

Last of all we have the people who possess nothing. Their object is to unite together the members of their own class of all nations, and so form a union by means of which they hope to attain their ends. This is not merely a moral movement ; its followers intend to impose their will on the world by force. It follows, therefore, that the only way by which it can be successfully combated is by the use

of force, particularly as the moral side of the movement is crude and primitive. The attempts that have been made to save bloodshed by compliance and compromise have proved a failure and are the result of political and historical ignorance.

Movements of this type never make uniform progress. In certain areas they die out or grow weaker, while in others they are only beginning to get a hold. International Bolshevism seems to be advancing over ground that has been well prepared beforehand, for in many places it has suddenly come into evidence before any one was aware that it had effected an entry. For this reason it is doubly dangerous and calls for the most ruthless measures to stamp it out.

As I write these lines the papers are announcing the appalling death of Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg—an example that should warn us of the seriousness of the movement, and one that should be taken to heart by all those who, by their spreading of illusions about freedom and by their lack of restraint, have prepared the ground for this poisonous growth.

In this time of our downfall the Reichstag has had to undergo bitter humiliation. This assembly that used to consider itself all-powerful has now been ruthlessly pushed on one side in the upheaval. It is to be hoped that it will re-establish its position of authority, for it is the constitutional representative

of the German people. If it does once more attain to power it must learn not to place the interests of party before the welfare of the nation. Unfortunately there is reason to doubt whether our nation has yet reached the necessary state of political maturity.

With the abdication of the reigning princes one difficulty that stood in the way of the foundation of a united state has vanished. Now we are faced with the extraordinary situation in which not only the numerous federal states wish to form themselves into independent states—which seems to me natural and just—but entirely new states are trying to come into existence, like the Rhine-Westphalian Republic, which Trimborn, a member of the Reichstag, and his associates are striving to form.

Perhaps questions of religion are playing their part in this. Is it possible that Rome has a hand in the game ? These changes are not likely to have the effect of strengthening the German Empire. They are rather reminiscent of the hereditary German weakness for splitting up, and are likely to favour the cause of the enemy. The union established by the power and skill of Bismarck has fallen to pieces. The security on which it rested, the imperial crown and the *Bundesrat,* has vanished. The German dream can never be repeated, but dreamers avail us little. Only men can help us who seek their task not in words but in deeds.

CHAPTER VIII

GOVERNMENTS

BEFORE the war Prussia and Germany were recognised, even by our enemies, to be the best governed countries in the world. During the war our enemies changed their tune, and our misguided people believed them and the anti-Government parties. It required a series of tragic events to awaken a desire to get back to the orderly conditions of former days, as the new governments, one after the other, showed themselves inadequate for their task.

The Prussian Ministry has been the example on which Imperial Germany has modelled itself. I have attended its sessions as a layman, but also as an attentive observer. My first impressions were favourable. The assembly conducted itself with a calm dignity ; no member ever forgot himself ; no measure was carried through without first being subjected to keen and expert consideration. Prussia was a model not only of resolute government but also of political soundness. The states of South Germany have never distinguished themselves for good government ; their strength and importance

lay in other directions. They could afford to indulge in their vaunted political liberty because Prussia did not do so. It is not surprising that Democracy has found its most fruitful soil among the South Germans. Payer, Gröber, Hausmann and Erzberger were the first members of the new Government. What have they effected, in conjunction with their president, Prince Max, who came from democratic Baden and within a year had lost his influence ?

The Prussian Ministry was not opposed to freedom. Among its members were even men of genuine liberal views, yet it was in no way democratic, but royalist.

But the influence of Bethmann-Hollweg swayed them all. Plenty of concessions were made to the majority parties. This was done not without considerable reluctance, but the members thought themselves unable to go contrary to the reasoning of the president. This is a state of things that passes my comprehension. In my opinion if a man feels the necessity of expressing scruples he should act in accordance with his scruples. Only a few stood firm to their opinions and had the courage to vote accordingly.

The concessions that were made with a view to conciliating the Poles has produced disastrous results. Lentze, a member of the Government, had given emphatic warning that this would be the case, and his prophecy has been fully justified by events.

The conflict of opinion reached its climax when the bill providing for universal suffrage in Prussia came under discussion. Every one had scruples about this bill with the exception of Count Rödern, who thought he had had favourable experience of universal suffrage in Strassburg, and Helfferich, who was of opinion that the internal situation had become so precarious that it would be unwise to shirk the bill.

Whether Bethmann-Hollweg acted according to his real judgment, or whether he was influenced by the fact that he had already pledged himself by promises he had made, I am not in a position to say.

It is well known who the Ministers were who refused to have anything to do with the bill. When it was definitely decided that there should be no delay in bringing in the bill these men sent in their resignations. As I was a soldier it was not open to me to follow their example.

Although this was a bill that concerned Prussia alone, all the Secretaries of State were summoned to the meeting of the Privy Council at which this step was decided on. With the single exception of Krätke, they one and all ranged themselves on the side of the Imperial Chancellor.

I have always regarded this result as being the outcome of panic, although at the time the Government still had control of all the forces of the Empire. An indication of the lengths to which they were

prepared to go in the direction of conciliation is given by a suggestion, of which I was informed at the time by Under-Secretary Wahnschaffe, that we should seek to make a good impression by setting at liberty Liebknecht. If ever conciliation has been shown by its consequences to be a sign of weakness, this was the case here.

Once, when after a conference some of the members of the Government again expressed to the Chancellor their scruples about the wisdom of the bill, he retorted as he was leaving them : " Yes, now is the time for it ; now is the time ! " But a really great man should not allow his actions to be ruled by time ; he should control time and make it subservient to his purpose. After Bethmann-Hollweg's downfall Scheidemann said of him that he was not a diplomat but a statesman. He was neither of these things, and certainly not a statesman, for a statesman must be afraid of nothing. Therefore his fate overtook him, in spite of, or rather because of, his fondness for compromise ; he was deserted even by his old supporters. Shortly after my appointment as Minister for War, and therefore as early as the autumn of 1916, Ludendorff said to me : " Bethmann will never succeed in making peace ; he must go ! " This remark should be noted by those who maintain that owing to obstinacy, ambition, or want of intelligence, Ludendorff pursued the war without giving a thought to peace. He

had it in his mind from the moment he assumed a position of influence.

I have reason to cherish grateful recollection of the Prussian Ministry, both before and after it was reconstituted, owing to the resignation of some of its members, as I have described above. I did not find myself in agreement with all its members, but they were all able men who knew their job, and men of cultured mind with whom it was a pleasure to work. They were jealous guardians of the ancient, tried tradition and firm believers in historical development. The most staunch upholder of all that concerned good form and correct behaviour was von Breitenbach. Even many of his old opponents must now wish to see again in public life the honourable, safe and independent procedure and the strict regard for order that distinguished those days.

In questions that concerned the Empire the Ministry often came off second best. It did not always receive sufficiently prompt information and was not always given a proper hearing. This has been the case, I believe, ever since the Bülow era. It has often been urged that steps should be taken to remedy this negligence, and promises have been received that this should be done, but in the stress of circumstances these promises have from time to time been forgotten again. The master-mind was wanting which neglects nothing.

The time during which Michaelis held the office

of Imperial Chancellor was too short to enable him to make his influence felt. No one, however, can feel anything but respect for this loyal and devoted man. Unlike others who have held this high office, he was glad when the burden of responsibility was removed from his shoulders.

With Count Hertling I have often worked, and we got on well together. It is a well-known fact that it was with a heavy heart that he brought himself to undertake the duties of Chancellor. His patriotism and devotion to duty will be denied by no one, but he was already too far advanced in age to grapple firmly with the situation, although the will to do so was in no way wanting. His principal strength lay in his skill in mediation. According to his own account, his work was often made difficult and hampered by the opposition of Erzberger. I have pointed out to him on more than one occasion that if we were to come out of the war successfully it would be necessary to get rid of the obsolete and incompetent Reichstag ; he was not disinclined to agree with me, but finally came to the conclusion that it was too late in the day.

The last time I saw him was just before he started on his journey to Spa, where the question of the armistice was to be discussed and decided. He did not, however, mention this to me and perhaps had not himself been informed. On that occasion he looked very old and weary. I am convinced that

the downfall of the Empire and the upheaval at home have helped to hasten his end.

Of the interregnum of Prince Max of Baden I have had no experience, except in its early days. The appointment of large numbers of Ministers without portfolio was only just beginning. It will be found difficult to discover what was the object of these appointments, unless they are regarded as a necessary adjunct of democracy. As far as I can remember, I had to do only with Gröber, Erzberger, Scheidemann and Bauer while I was a Minister. Whether they or other powers were responsible for getting rid of me I do not know, but I think it important to let it be known that my resignation was not voluntary, lest it should be thought that I deserted my post in my country's hour of need. The way in which it was done was certainly strange.

I made the acquaintance of Prince Max first in Berlin. He was very friendly towards me, and remembered that I had once been in command of a division from Baden. A few days later I was asked to be present at a conference. The assembly was received by the Prince, who immediately afterwards quitted us, as he had to leave the town at once for an important audience with the Emperor. As he said good-bye I again had a few words with him, and again he was very friendly. At the audience he told the Emperor that my resignation was a necessity.

If he had given me the slightest hint of his

intention I should have saved the Emperor the trouble of dismissing me by requesting him to relieve me of my office. I did not like the way in which this was done, but I was grateful to be relieved of my duties. As a German prince he would probably have preferred not to hold office at all rather than hold it for so short a time. This Government silently disappeared, and no one seemed to regret its disappearance.

I was sorry for old Payer, for whom I had a great respect. He knew how to keep separate the double *rôle* of member of the Government and party man, and was a man of honour. Apart from him, the Swabian soldiers whom I met in the field during the Somme battle, and on previous occasions, seemed to me to be far greater men than their politicians and statesmen.

CHAPTER IX

THE ARMY

THERE can be no doubt that the German army that took the field in 1914 was easily the best that has ever taken part in any war. Thoroughly trained as it was, firmly united and conscious of the duty that lay before it, and fired not only by its own enthusiasm but also by that of the whole nation, it was ready for any task it might be called upon to carry through.

For the first time in the history of our army reserve formations were sent into the field from the beginning, side by side with the regular troops. Regulars and reserves marched and went into action together as parts of the same armies.

Even Landwehr troops were at once entrusted with difficult and important duties. They did not disappoint the confidence that had been placed in them, and no further proof is needed that their training had been conducted on right lines.

Doubt had been expressed in some quarters as to whether the German people, and with them the army itself, after so many long years of peace, and the high and luxurious standard of living that comes with

peace, the refined and overstrained culture, and many other enervating influences of the time through which they had just been living, would still be equal to undertaking tasks which would make great demands on their courage, self-denial and sacrifice. All such doubts as these were proved by events to be without foundation.

The core of the nation and of the army was sound, and the elements of weakness did not at first come into evidence. But they were there from the first, for wherever you have millions of men you are sure to have a certain proportion of good-for-nothings, cowards, criminals and men who have no thought for anything beyond their own interests.

The corps of officers was by tradition and training inspired with the true soldierly spirit ; they were thoroughly loyal and filled with the love of their Fatherland. They saw in their King and Emperor their supreme war-lord, to whom they devoted themselves body and soul ; it was to him that they owed their position and the great respect in which they were held by the people. The senior officers had observed the affectionate care with which he had watched over the interests of his army ever since he had succeeded to the throne, and the younger had never had any reason to think otherwise than that their Emperor lived and worked for and with his troops. They knew him only as a soldier and never thought of him as anything else. They had all been

thoroughly trained in their profession. From the leading generals down to the youngest subaltern, the war was to give them an opportunity to show what they were capable of, for very few of them had had any previous experience of active service.

The corps of officers was drawn from the most widely different circles of the educated classes. In a few branches of the service this was not the case : the officers of these were recruited by tradition and mutual interest from certain definite circles and families. This system is apt to give rise to prejudice ; it would seem wiser to mix the officers without any regard to their origin and social standing. All parties derive benefit from contact with other types and classes ; it widens their outlook, prejudices disappear, and corners are rubbed off. I should like to see some members of our nobility of the sword in every officers' corps. By their traditions these men already possess the best military qualities. Many of our officers were accustomed to wealth and luxury, but the majority were used to a simple life and were without private means. I once heard the proposal made that a definite distinction should be made between rich and poor officers' corps. Poor men are often placed at a great disadvantage when they have to associate with men who have plenty of money ; but in an officers' corps it is to be expected that these latter will exercise restraint and take this fact into account.

It was often the case that poor men who wished to become officers would select a corps in which the standard of living corresponded with their means. Men who make a wrong use of their wealth, or seek to make a display, are out of place as officers. I like the answer of the commanding officer of a regiment of foot-guards to a father who introduced his son, whom he wanted to place in this regiment, with the words : " You can rely on me to provide my son with any necessary allowance, no matter how big." The commanding officer replied : " In my regiment I have no use for subalterns of that type."

A good education is essential to every officer, and more than ever to-day, when he is likely to find so many well-educated men of every kind under his command. It is, however, necessary to guard against the danger of forcing them all up to the same standard, for a good scholar is far from making, necessarily, a good officer. A number of years ago it was the custom to allow a certain period of seniority in promotion to ensigns who had passed the school-leaving examination that qualified for matriculation to the technical colleges and universities when they had reached a certain standard in the military college. This scheme was instituted with the object of avoiding hardship that otherwise arose in the case of those who, having remained longer at school, did not enter the army until a more advanced age than the majority. It also acted as an incentive to

candidates for the army to remain at school long enough to enable them to pass the leaving examination. These young men soon outstripped in promotion the others who had already put in two years of hard work as officers. This always seemed to me to be hard on the latter. This is generally the way in life : in trying to remedy cases of hardship it often occurs that hardship is simply diverted on to other shoulders.

The public often got hold of some extraordinary ideas on the subject of the training and education of officers. The artillery and engineers came to be regarded as the learned arms of the service ; they were expected to have a profound knowledge of the theory and application of mathematics. I was myself an artillery officer and have always had a liking for the study of mathematics ; but for practical purposes all the mathematics that were required for artillery work was simple addition from one to ten. Any one who wishes to have a thorough knowledge of the mechanism of his guns of course requires more than this, but it is all that is required for their ordinary use.

The cavalry was regarded by the public with some aloofness if not actual animosity, as being the preserve of the nobility and the wealthy classes. In spite of this, however, this arm contained quite a large number of highly-cultured and capable men of the world. The infantry was regarded with the least

respect, probably because it was so much larger than the other arms, and because it moved so laboriously in the dust. Nevertheless the infantryman is the truly typical soldier. It is not merely an accident that it is from this arm that the greatest number and the most famous of our highest generals have sprung. I have often advised fathers to put their sons into the infantry, which has always borne the brunt of the battle and, in spite of the development of science as applied to war, still continues to do so. No service forms such a good training-ground for a soldier and for war as service in the infantry.

The German nation has always been a nation of soldiers, and it is to be hoped that when we have waked again from the present nightmare it will become so again. At the same time, as a nation we have shown little understanding for military affairs. I feel that it is my duty to express this opinion, at the risk of its being strongly resented.

One of the results of the world-war has been to break down many of the barriers that kept distinct the different arms of the service, and this has brought great changes. A cavalry officer had to fight on foot, and not only with his own troop; a great number of cavalry officers, too, were permanently transferred to the infantry. There was no longer any difference made between the use of these two arms. Even the heavy cuirassiers and the *Garde du Corps*, which has so often been the object of attacks

on the part of mischief-makers, have taken their share of the fighting in the open field and the trenches, and have lost quite as heavily as any infantry regiments.

The artillery and the engineers have had to adapt themselves to totally new conditions and have had to invent every possible expedient to meet them. The new weapons that were used in this war for the first time—the hand-grenade, the mine-thrower, the airship and aeroplane, the gas and the tanks, as well as the rapid development of the different means of communication and observation—all called for wider knowledge and greater adaptability. In coping with all these different branches of the service officers of all arms found themselves in close co-operation. The changes wrought by all this seemed so radical that I was once asked by some teachers from the technical colleges to allow them permission to visit the front. They were anxious to ascertain whether the methods of teaching science and mathematics in the higher educational establishments could not be placed on another footing. I gave the necessary permission; the journeys took place, and a report was drawn up of the results of their experiences.

I thought it necessary to warn them, however, not to base all their conclusions on the phenomena of this war, in which the most important forms of warfare were only in evidence in exceptional cases.

We must, on the contrary, be prepared to deal with new phenomena in future wars, and so be ready to adapt ourselves to new developments as they appear. This is true both for the officers and, to a lesser extent, for the men.

For these reasons a shortened period of active military training is to-day less adequate than ever to produce efficient troops. The short period of training that was given to the later reinforcements cannot be brought up as an argument, against this view. Their training was insufficient and this was the cause of a good deal of lack of efficiency, which did not appear on the surface so long as the old army was still in the majority. It was not infrequently that one heard the latter exclaim angrily, both in action and in the course of the daily round of work: "You young fellows are too stupid for anything!"

The officers of the reserve who were trained in peace-time, and went through the early part of the war, did splendid work. They vied with their fellow-officers of the active list in devotion to duty and readiness for self-sacrifice. In the course of the war attempts were made to sow discord between these two classes of officers. An excuse was found in the inequality of opportunity that existed between the active and the reserve officer with regard to promotion to the staff appointments. Later on, when the officers of the reserve had shown their capacity to

hold positions of leadership, this inequality was abolished.

In peace-time there had been very few examples of the appointment of these officers to the staff, as it was considered that their training had been insufficient to enable them to fill these important posts. But when the war had given them experience, it is true that they should have been given a larger share of this promotion than was actually the case.

There was certainly one good reason why this should not be done. Under the stress of the heavy fighting they had soon been forged into excellent regimental leaders. For the staff appointments, however, quite other qualities and experience are called for than those that are given by active service, such, for example, as the capacity to select, form and train an officers' corps.

Complaints were also made that officers of the reserve were not selected for positions on the higher staffs. But trained and experienced adjutants and general staff officers were the best link between the numerous untrained subordinate officers, who had no previous training in the technicalities of their profession, and the higher command. But there were other posts in which good use could be made of conscientious workers in which expert knowledge was not required. The services of officers of the reserve were then made use of later in many posts on

the higher staffs ; they were already well represented on the subordinate staffs.

It is not such a simple matter as it may appear to break away from established custom and tradition under active service conditions. It is not safe to indulge indiscriminately in experiments that may have the most disastrous consequences. In this case it was found necessary to modify the conditions, because ignorance and malice were trying to spread the impression that the officers of the active list were being spared at the expense of the others. Any one who has had first-hand knowledge of the work of the adjutants and officers of the general staff in the field will never associate with them the idea of sparing.

Among the officers other than those of the active list there existed great and unfair differences in financial circumstances which, as the war became prolonged, gave rise to cases of great hardship. A man who in peace-time held a post in the public service still drew, in addition to his officer's pay, the greater part of the salary he had earned before the war. Those who had been members of the independent professions, business men, etc., had to rely entirely on their army pay ; many of these were obliged to spend their savings, run into debt, or starve with their families.

A member of the Social Democratic party in the Reichstag seized the opportunity of the strike in Upper Silesia to make an attack on the officers. He

demanded for the miners who were on strike a minimum wage of ten marks a day, and added that, judging from their conduct in their clubs, the officers, at any rate, were feeling nothing of the hardships of the time. I had no difficulty in contradicting this ridiculous fallacy. The lieutenants in the army, even those who were married, do not here at home draw the sum that this man was proposing as the bare minimum required by the strikers, and it was a fact that many of the clubs had been obliged to close down because the officers had found themselves no longer able to afford the expense of frequenting them. Many a cry of distress has reached my ears from officers who begged to be allowed to draw rations for themselves and their families from the kitchens that supplied the men, as they were unable to provide themselves with the means of obtaining food, not to mention the other necessities of life. This orator, who jumped to conclusions, should have seen the clubs in which the lawless members of the Soldiers' Councils lived with their prostitutes; in that case he would have good reason to talk not merely of good living but of riotous extravagance. This is an example of the way in which agitation is carried on by lying and ignorance. Many a man in the ranks was astounded when he heard the real story of the circumstances with which the officers had to contend. The social scale is reversed to-day, when the labourer draws

wages to which the educated man, who has spent many years and large sums of money in preparing himself for his profession, never attains.

I should be the last to grudge the steady and industrious working-man his good wages. He on his side should not grudge others their fair share. It may appear right to the Social Democrat to see large numbers of educated men sink in the social scale for lack of means, but this is of no service to the community and the State.

In spite of much hardship the officers of our army have done their duty. It is, of course, true that there were among them many well-to-do and rich men. All the greater is the honour due to those of smaller means who, in close association with their more fortunate comrades, had to do their duty in circumstances of great hardship.

There have been many cases of failure on the part of officers of the reserve to maintain discipline and to take proper care of their men. Efficiency in this respect can only be attained by long experience and constant practice. This became still more noticeable as the officers of the old army were replaced by younger and younger men in respect to whom the older reserve officers stood in very much the same relationship as the old regular officers formerly bore to those of the reserve. This new type of officer is aptly described by the following words: "They knew how to die in front of their men, but not how

to live." It is true that their private life left a good deal to be desired; they lacked the steadiness of manhood and experience of the world.

The question will be asked why non-commissioned officers and picked men from the ranks were not promoted to commissioned rank. Other armies have instituted this system even in peace-time, but they maintain a distinction between the two types of officers by limiting the promotion of those who have risen from non-commissioned rank below a certain rank. We have always insisted on a certain standard of education for candidates for commissions in our army. Now the school-leaving certificate, which entitles the holder to limit his period of military service to one year, or even the "certificate of maturity," which demands a higher standard, cannot be taken as a guarantee of a really complete education. At the same time, a certain fixed standard was considered desirable, and at any rate it enabled the authorities to know where they stood. You do not lessen the number of the malcontents by establishing conditions under which every one has the prospect or the right of promotion.

During the war it was made a very easy matter to qualify for the necessary educational certificate. There was a constant increase in the number of educational establishments anxious to be recognised as qualified to award this certificate. Even the artists' clause was mistakenly taken advantage of

by those who wished to qualify as officers. This clause was only intended to take effect in time of peace, and to enable men with particular aptitude for different branches of art to qualify for a shortened period of military service, and so guard against the ill-effects that a long period of training with the army might have on the cultivation of their talent. It does not give the holder any claim to a commission. There was some misunderstanding caused by this in the case of some individuals, and also in some arms of the service.

To compensate for the shortage of officers provision was made for the appointment for the period of the war of a certain number of warrant-officers and sergeant-lieutenants. These were intermediate ranks which would have sufficed for a war of short duration. They were intended as a concession and a distinction to reward non-commissioned officers of long service and unpromoted candidates for commissions. Often enough in practice it worked out as the contrary of what was intended, or at any rate came to be regarded as such. If he was no longer needed to make up the complement of officers, a warrant-officer could be put back to his former rank. This quite wrongly came to be regarded as a degradation and the system was later abolished. The sergeant-lieutenant was intended to rank as an officer, but he was not always treated in accordance with his rank and he was always the junior member

of his mess. He felt slighted when a large number of young officers were promoted over his head. It was difficult for the regular non-commissioned officer to reach these ranks, as they could only be qualified for by long service and could not be retained after the war as they did not exist in peace-time. He would then have to give up his rank or resign at the end of the war. In that case he would perhaps have found difficulty in finding employment as a civilian.

One of these sergeant-lieutenants once wrote me a letter in which he put down our collapse to the fact that they had not been promoted. This is very characteristic of their way of reasoning, but it is not a good receipt to assure against failure, for many of these men were quite unsuitable for further promotion and others actually were promoted. Another one appealed to a member of the Reichstag with an application to be appointed to a commission in the reserve, adding, that as a middle-aged man and the father of a family he did not feel inclined to attempt any deed of special heroism. That showed a very worthy and frank spirit, but was also a judgment against himself.

All these ranks could, like any other man in the army, win a commission by some deed of special distinction in face of the enemy. Quite a number, indeed, have been promoted in this way, but greater generosity might have been shown in dealing with these cases. Any man who had consistently done

his duty through the long years of trench warfare, and had been an example to others, might have become an officer, provided that he was suitable in temperament, bearing and personal circumstances. It is, however, absolutely necessary to keep to some definite limit, not the least important reason being the interests of the men who are always critically observant of their superiors. Personally, I should have preferred to do without these two new ranks and kept to the traditional rank of vice-sergeant-major, who was the recognised representative of the officer. If the vice-sergeant-major was suitable for commissioned rank it was possible to promote him.

In any case, it was by no means necessarily certain that a man gained by this promotion from the ranks. I have known cases where an excellent vice-sergeant-major begged that his name should not be sent in for a commission, as he thought that it would lead to difficulties later. It is not every one who in the same circumstances would have taken such a sensible view.

There is no doubt whatever that in the course of the war mistakes were made in the selection of officers. Commissions were given in this way to men who were totally unfitted to hold them. The superior officers on whose judgment it was necessary to rely in making the choice were often too young and inexperienced to be good judges of men. The short periods of lull between the fighting did not

give them enough time to watch the candidates for promotion and to get to know them sufficiently well to decide as to their fitness. It was as a rule necessary to fall back on the reports of those who had charge of their courses of training, and these as a rule dealt only with the aptitude they had shown on parade, and only touched in the most general terms on their other, more personal, qualifications.

As the enquiries into their personal and private circumstances at home tended to become more and more perfunctory their selection could not be expected to produce irreproachable results. It was only to be expected, therefore, that the appeal should be heard from the men : " We want our old officers back again ! " These, however, lay buried under the soil, or sick and wounded in the hospitals, or had gone home unfit for service. Their only reward was to have mud thrown at them and be the object of abuse and insult. In the storm and stress of war the men had held a very different opinion of their officers, under whose leadership they felt secure and who had seen that they were well cared for.

In spite of periods of serious shortage, which is bound to be the case in a long war, the Corps of Officers fulfilled the needs of leadership to the last.

Many of the officers showed themselves incapable of maintaining a proper standard of discipline. Certain departments of an officer's life are soon acquired, but the strict maintenance of discipline

calls for military qualities, which can only be acquired by training and experience and the gift for compelling respect for discipline in the men. Side by side with these qualities must go a certain measure of knowledge of men, so that each man may be treated according to his individuality and not as part of a machine. But the most important thing of all in an officer is that he should possess the necessary firmness and use all the means at his disposal to see that his will is carried out. To effect this he must not shrink from employing the most drastic measures when they are called for. The most serious consequences have arisen from weakness of purpose and unwise leniency in the infliction of punishment and bringing cases of breach of discipline before a court-martial, though these ideas of mercy have found favour with, and been encouraged by, the people's representatives.

There is one other point I feel I must touch on, though it is difficult to bring forward supporting evidence. I have not been able to feel convinced that every wounded or sick officer has done all that he could to get back to the front as quickly as possible. It is, of course, natural that there should be no desire to curtail the period of rest, convalescence and recuperation. It is possible, too, that this disinclination may have been strengthened from time to time by too anxious a view of the case on the part of the medical officers. It is, however, the duty

of every officer to realise that his place is at the front as soon as he is at all fit to fill it. I have known officers who quickly returned to their duty at the front even after they had lost an arm or leg, and bravely continued to take part in the fighting. These man have set an example of devotion to duty that all should follow. But the whole nation must be imbued with this spirit of self-mastery and devotion to duty if it is to be expected of every recruit. In the Prussia of the old days such a spirit fired the nation for a long period, but in the Germany of to-day there have been times during the war when it was by no means universal.

To-day the officer finds himself faced with the serious question whether under the altered circumstances which prevail in our country he should continue to serve in the army or not. Many will feel that they are unable to do so if they are to remain true to their convictions. Every man, however, who does not feel himself bound by such convictions should, in God's name, continue his service and not desert his Fatherland in the hour of need.

Even a staunch supporter of the monarchy can do faithful service in a republic, as has been amply proved in France. The present state of disorder and want of discipline will, it is to be hoped, eventually pass away, for an army can only exist where there are order and discipline. Should the future bring developments such as no good German can

hope to witness, then certainly there can be no place for a loyal, honour-loving officer in an army as such a state of things would produce.

The old, systematically-trained and carefully-educated soldiers of the German army were excellent material, with the bonds of comradeship that united them one with the other, and the confidence and trust with which they regarded their officers. They understood the value of *esprit de corps* and were jealous of their soldierly honour. When these men fell their places were filled from a reserve in which the standard of devotion and efficiency was equally high, although the mobilisation of the newly-formed reserve brigades that were put into the first line early in the war had made a heavy demand on their numbers. After convalescence the wounded and sick were sent back to their old units, where they rejoined their friends. This custom, however, was soon departed from. The heavy losses that occurred from time to time in particular sectors of the front made it necessary to throw in all the reserve that were in any way available at one particular point. This inevitably led to a more or less radical change in the personnel of the units concerned. Men who were strangers to one another, and even belonging to different nationalities, were thrown together by this means. If friendly feeling and mutual tolerance had been shown this would have led to a widening of outlook and a broadening of sympathy on both

sides, but the desire to be back among their old comrades proved too strong. Even a common dialect or accent proved a bond that drew closer together the men from the same part of the country.

In Prussia it used to be the custom to put men who came from the same part of the country into the same regiment, and the various army corps were related to the different provinces from which they were recruited and reinforced. This arrangement had a very beneficial effect on the army in general. The men were in close touch with one another, and they knew that an interest was taken at home in their welfare and the way they bore themselves as soldiers. After the shifting of the population, as a result of the development of industry, it became impossible to continue this custom to the same extent. The regiments recruited from thinly-populated areas had to be reinforced from any part of the country where the necessary men were available. This mixing would have done no harm if every part of the Empire had been imbued with a strong sense of nationality. Unfortunately this was lacking in this great German war. A Swabian, Bavarian, or Badener might feel himself an utter stranger in a Prussian unit, and *vice versâ*. The complication and variety of the German tribes were the source of great cultural forces, but at the same time they presented a very serious obstacle when it was a question of welding these elements into one great

whole. The homogeneity of the various tribes was restored towards the end of the war as this was demanded on all sides. But within the tribe it was impossible always to post a man to the same unit. Many men who were returned to service after being wounded or sick had to be transferred time after time. This involved cases of hardship, of course. Previous service was not regarded and men had to begin again at the bottom to recover their position. It was just the same with the rota for leave. Of course every man who was transferred took with him into his new unit the claim to precedence he had already established. But this often led to great difficulties. Perhaps the sergeant-major who kept the nominal rolls or leave-lists was killed or otherwise fell out, or new officers came to the regiment who did not know the men, or the lists themselves were lost in battle, or destroyed by artillery fire, or burnt. The superficial critic has never fully realised the appalling difficulties which the immense scale of this war involved.

But all these inconveniences were put up with so long as the old reserves were in the majority. Reinforcement from the less thoroughly disciplined Landsturm produced unsatisfactory results. It is obvious that a Landsturm man of forty years of age no longer possesses the same power of adapting himself to new conditions as a younger man. He finds the discipline and the unaccustomed exertions of training particularly irksome. The instructional staff in

peace knew only one kind of training, and they were expected to make serviceable soldiers out of these older men too. It could not be expected that they should suddenly master a quite different system of instruction. Then there arose an outcry against the monotony of the drill and the bullying of the men by their instructors.

There is one way of avoiding this anomaly. Every man who is physically fit should be trained while he is young. Even the unfit should be continually called up for re-examination, for the war has proved that many of their defects disappear as they grow older. There is no need to be over-anxious on this point; the standard of physique has been lowered in the course of the war without any evil results. Many weaknesses resulting from sedentary habits, and weaklings obsessed by their own ill-health, have indeed been cured by military service.

A further source of difficulty were the men who had been released from imprisonment in Russia. They were under the impression that they could not be called on for further service at the front. Those who had returned from imprisonment in France did enjoy this privilege, for in the negotiations between the French and German Governments with regard to the exchange of prisoners a stipulation had been made that neither country should put exchanged prisoners back into the firing-line. In Russia English and French agents had deceived our prisoners into

thinking that they could not be sent back to the front after their return home without running the risk of being shot if they were again captured. The result of this was that it was not easy to make it clear to them that they were in no way exempt from service at the front.

Many of them, therefore, resisted the order transferring them to the western front. This was also the case with many units that were transferred in a body from the eastern to the western front, as they knew that in the West war was far from being a children's game. The many cases of mutiny during transport by rail that occurred during the last years of the war were a bad sign. In such cases those in command should have dealt with the situation much more firmly than was the case : one summary example that would have put fear into the others would soon have effected a change in their behaviour. But the officers of the old army were no longer there, and the younger ones were unable to rise to the occasion. As these mutinous men were for the most part soldiers who had already seen long service, they fell back into the usual routine of discipline as soon as they got back to the front. Many of them were even ashamed of their unmilitary and insubordinate behaviour. I know of one case where a company had risen in this way and run amok, firing off their rifles. Their rifles were taken from them by another contingent and they

were to be marched through a village. They begged that they might not be subjected to this indignity, and from that moment reverted to their previous behaviour as loyal, honourable soldiers.

The worst of all was the influence exercised by the youngest classes of recruits. When the war broke out these young men were hardly old enough to have left school. The army took away from them the control of their fathers, and they soon began to earn large wages and were an easy prey to the influence of the malcontents and agitators. The large numbers of combed-out men, who so far had been exempt from military service, ranged themselves behind these young men, and together they formed an undisciplined and rebellious section of the army.

Many an officer commanding a regiment has told me that the older classes were faithful to their duty and were willing to carry it through, but nothing was sacred to the young men, who held everything up to derision. It was from these classes that sprang, in the first place, those defaulters who broke their ranks and in the retreat through Belgium began to fraternise with the enemy, to sell their rifles, and give themselves up to looting. There were, of course, exceptions among them, but they were not strong enough to make their influence felt. Now the older classes were not all models of soldierly virtue, and even before the younger men were called up there existed malingerers, deserters and defaulters,

but the loyal men were in a sufficiently large majority to keep them from doing very much harm, especially at the front.

On the lines of communication the discipline was uncertain, for this was the place where the enemy's influence could most readily make an impression. It has become the custom for the army in the field to impute to the home country all the blame for the collapse of the army. It is quite true that their regrettable attitude was the cause of a good deal of the trouble ; but the fault lies on both sides.

We know now out of their own mouths that the Independent party had begun to work on the army as early as 1916. The result of their work was manifested by the number of men on leave and in hospital who influenced the people at home just as unfavourably, and to an equal extent, as the people at home influenced the army in the field. Many a patriotic German has sent me information concerning the agitating or pessimistic speeches indulged in by men who were on leave, but unfortunately without being able to furnish me with the names of these men, which they did not know themselves. In a few individual cases even officers have not shrunk from doing what they could to lower the national *morale* at home, particularly after the army had gone through a period of misfortune. The people at home were never encouraged, and nothing was done to keep up their spirit ; they heard nothing but grousing and

cursing. The discouragement was mutual, so that it is unfair to lay the blame exclusively on either side. The fault did not lie with any one in particular, but with the whole nation.

But the greatest share of the responsibility certainly lies with the recruits of the younger classes. It will be asked why they were not taught better during their period of training. A warped mind is not so quickly put straight ; the period of training was too short for the fault to be eradicated ; the people at home did not set a good example, and the reserve troops with which they were trained were not all that could be desired. They had been combed out again and again and every fit man had had to be sent to the front ; so much so that from time to time some of them had to be brought back. Every effort was made to keep the troops who were under training behind the lines away from any adverse influence and to put them into the hands of experienced instructors and commanders. But even in these training camps outside influences could not be entirely excluded.

It is a matter for wonder that the older, loyal troops did not keep these immature and insubordinate youngsters in hand. It is true that they were tired and dulled by the hardships they had undergone. We find the same state of things at home. Young boys, with and without uniform, lounge about the streets and force their way

along, elbowing their elders to one side as they pass.

There was a great difference between the conduct of the troops in the field at the beginning of the war and at the end. In the old days the infantry used to forge their way irresistibly forward in the attack. It was no longer possible for the artillery to group the batteries close together without running the risk of annihilation. They had to be carefully concealed and the firing positions disposed in scattered groups, and careful communication established between the different batteries and headquarters. This required a good deal of time to arrange. In this way it came about that the infantry could not always wait for the artillery preparation before opening the attack. The result was that they were subjected to a severe strain and heavy losses. But the men of the old army endured all this with a spirit of real heroism.

The spirit that prevailed among these men showed itself in many ways, some very striking and some hardly noticeable. When we met the wounded we would often hear them express the wish to get better as quickly as possible so that they might get back to their unit with the least delay. As they went into action the men would shout to their officers some such words as these : " Don't get so far ahead, sir ; you will only get hit. Keep back in the firing-line and we will all go on together."

On one occasion, after an offensive south of

Longwy, I came upon the Emperor in a village that had just been taken by our troops. The men were surrounding his car in dense crowds so that it was only with difficulty that I was able to force my way through. They were throwing flowers from the village gardens into his lap and doing their best to get hold of his hand. What has happened to all these brave and faithful men? Have they all fallen or have they changed?

At the beginning of the war the cavalry were still mounted. The enemy cavalry could not stand against them, but avoided an encounter. The engineers fought shoulder to shoulder with the infantry and cleared a way for them through every obstacle. The soldiers were men who knew their duty and would endure any hardship or exertion for which they were called on without flinching. In those days there was no grousing. The food from the field-kitchens was eaten with relish and no one thought of envying his officers their specially prepared food. It is true that many gifts of food were sent out from home, so that no one had to go short. This state of things continued through the early days of trench warfare. The men endured day after day of heavy drum-fire without wavering, and beat back the subsequent attack of superior numbers with confidence.

Later on great changes came about. The gifts sent out from home began to diminish. Even

though the officers in the trenches were ready and glad to live on the same rations as the men, the officers of the staff and those whose duties kept them behind the lines still had special kitchens for their own use. This gradually gave rise to envy and distrust ; it was said that the officers were drawing more than their fair share of the supplies. Even to-day, at Social Democratic meetings, old officers' menus are brought up as a means of stirring up agitation. It would have been just as easy to bring forward the luxurious way in which some of our working-men were living as a result of the high wages they were earning, while the majority of the people were obliged to starve.

The men always received, at any rate, adequate supplies to keep them from hunger. But the daily ration of much the same food, with little variety, served out for years is bound in the end to grow distasteful. Every man naturally did his best in one way or another to get hold of a few luxuries to vary the monotony of the army ration, but many were unable to afford much in this way, and a comparison of their own lot with that of those in higher positions roused feelings of envy. Nor was this the case only with regard to officers ; envy often arose between the men themselves. The men whose homes were in the country continued to receive gifts of food from home after their comrades from the towns had ceased to get anything, and this gave rise to ill-feeling, though

in many cases these gifts were shared one with another.

It would perhaps have been better if the officers had set a good example by denying themselves special food and sharing the lot of their men. But there are two ways of looking at these things. The English army have always deliberately made a special point of supplying those in the more responsible positions with better food, and consider it important that it should be so. Our supporters of universal equality think otherwise ; they prefer to get an advantage for themselves rather than allow it to others, as we now see often enough. Responsibility and duties that require a high standard of intelligence no longer seem to be valued in this country.

Once when I had occasion to mention in the Reichstag that while I was in the field I never once went on leave, Ebert, one of the members, said that a general did not have such a bad time as a private soldier and was in a better position to hold out. Responsibility for the lives and welfare of many thousands of men, and for the safety and honour of the Fatherland, did not seem to him at that time a heavy burden for a man to bear. It is to be hoped that he has since learned to think differently. But it was the custom of the Social Democratic party, and part of a deliberately conceived plan, to disparage everything that distinguished the officer from his men.

There can be no doubt that the reduced *morale* in the army was further depressed by the grumbling and complaints at home. I have often felt ashamed of my fellow-countrymen when I had to witness this discontent and listen to their wailing, and then compare this state of things with the patient endurance of the French, who had worse things to bear than we. Now our people have been forced to assume this *rôle* because they were too weak to shoulder a reasonable burden.

In face of these many evil influences the *morale* of our troops sank in very different degrees. Many divisions were very little affected, and for a long time continued to maintain their old standard of excellence and loyalty, whilst others failed absolutely.

The infantry had for the most part forgotten the valiant way in which they used to advance to the attack, and remained dependent on the effectiveness of the artillery. This arm had been continuously increasing ; the weight and efficiency of their guns had increased in proportion. All means of defence also grew in importance, side by side with the development of the offensive ; this is always the case in prolonged wars. The same was apparent on the enemy's side. They no longer attacked while the machine-guns were still firing. Their tanks were still able to make an impression when their attack was unexpected. As soon as our men learned to keep

their heads they were able to hold off even this formidable means of attack.

But the behaviour of the troops suffered more and more as the younger and less satisfactory reinforcements began to come up in greater numbers. Whereas in the old days they would remain steady under day after day of heavy drum-fire, and beat off confidently the subsequent attack, now it often required the drum-fire alone to shake their nerve.

In spite of all this, however, our fighting power was not yet broken. The great successes we won in the summer of 1918 are proof of this. They were the last great achievements and could never be repeated. After that we had to content ourselves with the defensive.

It must have made a deep impression on the command when one of our armies was rolled back by the enemy divisions that were occupying the opposite trenches, unsupported by any considerable reserves. This made General Headquarters at Spa begin to think of the armistice. The inhuman conditions put forward by the enemy, which called to mind the Eastern conquerors of ancient time rather than civilised peoples, revived the thought of resistance. But the outburst of national enthusiasm that had been hoped for did not materialise, and the treachery at home cut the arteries of the army.

It is a strange and tragic fact that the navy should be responsible for starting the insubordination that

caused the overthrow of our army. The pet of the nation and of its representatives, the creation of the Emperor which was to open the way for us to world-power, the navy, in spite of the brave U-boat crews and many other good elements, had become a hot-bed of conspiracy and treachery.

Many parts of the navy had gone through years without going into action. That is what poisoned them. When they feared that they were at last going to be led to battle they mutinied. This is the blackest page in our history. When this period is reviewed calmly and without prejudice, public opinion will condemn the culprits without allowing itself to be deceived by talk about the benefits of the Revolution. At present the masses are rejoicing over their so-called freedom, but Germany has never been less free than she is to-day. Already private soldiers are raising their voices and condemning the conduct of the mutinous sailors as treachery pure and simple. Former supporters of the sailors have told me that they had refused to join a Sailors' Union because they were ashamed. It is impossible to assume that the traitors acted alone and on their own initiative. Their plan was carefully prepared beforehand. Other powers must have stood behind them who were not devoid of skill and intelligence. On this point, too, it is to be hoped that further light will be shed.

It is no wonder that the English say that the sailors stabbed the army in the back, and the French

jeer and call it another Köpenick affair. But in this case it is not a question of the reputation of the good town of Köpenick, but of the honour and existence of the German Empire. It is tragic enough that those few troops, for the most part of inferior quality, who were left in the country should have shown themselves weak enough to join the movement. They and the large numbers who cheered on the sailors will have to bear the consequences, as well as their children and their children's children. The song of German loyalty has been made a mockery. Faith has not been kept, but unfaithfulness turns against its own master.

CHAPTER X

THE ALLIES

THROUGH custom, tradition and the personality of the old Emperor, Austria still seemed capable of life. For a long time she had been regarded as an effete collection of states. The first impetus was given to the world-war in the new crown-lands and by the Serbians. Twenty years ago when I first became acquainted with these countries the inhabitants of Serbia seemed to be glad to have been freed from Turkish domination and did not appear to be occupied with any independent aims. The Croats who had been flocking into this country formed a counterpoise to their neighbours, who held different religious beliefs, and they were supported by the Church of Rome. The friction between the two took the form of petty quarrels for which the Croats were responsible. There was a ridiculous dispute as to the name of the language. It had always been known as Serbo-Croat. The Croats thought themselves slighted because their name came second.

In the new countries a good deal was done towards the spread of civilisation in the forceful and

uncompromising manner of the Hungarians, and their methods were not altogether without a touch of the Oriental. According to their version of the story, the Government was to do great things for the education of the Serbs by means of schools. The further developments I was unable to follow.

Then suddenly the murder at Serajevo drew all eyes to these countries and their inhabitants.

Whether this murder would of necessity have led to the war and to our participation in it, it is idle to discuss.

For the army there was no time for retrospective reflection. The war was there! In Austria it was at first treated quite lightly. There the same indifference and ignorance with regard to great political questions reigned as with us. Frivolity seemed to leave no room for the serious side of life. I have witnessed the performance of an operetta in the Prater that overstepped all bounds even according to the Berlin standards. The audience consisted of middle-class citizens, Government officials and officers and their families, including their daughters, with whom they chatted gaily and applauded loudly, while I thought I should be obliged to go out.

When the war broke out the younger officers said light-heartedly: "Francis Joseph has so far lost every war he has entered on; he will lose this one, too." The attitude was: "If we are to go under let us go under cheerfully."

The decadent state into which the nation had fallen, however, is testified to by the number of cases in which officers in high positions were convicted of treason at the beginning of the war.

Our officers and men have frequently formed a very adverse judgment of the Austrians who fought side by side with them. German-Austrians have complained to me that our troops in forming these opinions made no distinction between Germans and Slavs. They were unable to distinguish between these two separate races who were always pulling opposite ways ; as the different parts of Germany are all Germans so they took every one they saw in the Austrian uniform to be Austrian. This dislike of the Austrians developed later into hatred, particularly among the prisoners in Russia. The Germans who were captured by the Russians found themselves in the same camps as the Austrians, by whom they were greatly outnumbered.

When the Swedish Red Cross brought to the camps the gifts that had been sent from Germany for our prisoners they could not keep the Austrians off and had to give them a share to avoid having them all taken by force. The Czechs, too, took away from our men their gifts from home. This helped greatly to fan the flame of hatred. Our isolated commands in Galicia and Hungary, too, did not have any reason to cherish very friendly recollections of the inhabitants of these parts, for they had to overcome

a good deal of opposition in buying or requisitioning the necessities of life. Of course, this dislike was often directed against men who were quite innocent of any of these things, which is much to be regretted.

The ill effects of a long war began to make their appearance at a very early date in the Austro-Hungarian army. When I say this I am speaking quite apart from the untrustworthiness of the Slav sections, which is well known. Large numbers of officers and men were wandering about behind the lines and at home who should have been at the front. Far more men were drained from the firing-line to fill all kinds of positions in the rear than was considered necessary in the German army.

The discipline was bad, for the delinquents were treated with even greater weakness than was the case with us, as we hear in the famous proclamation of the Emperor Charles. An attempt was made later to tighten up the discipline again by the reintroduction of severe punishment, but it came too late to do any good. At last things came to such a pass that on one occasion at a race meeting in Vienna several thousands of officers were present who had absented themselves without leave from the Italian front. The numbers of the defaulters as told to me were so large that I could not believe that they were correct.

Highly-placed officers and many other Austrians pointed to the Jewish officers and men as the cankers in the Austrian army. In spite of all the talk there

has been on this subject, the Jewish question has played a very small part in our own army. It is probable, however, that this difficulty will become more formidable as time goes on. I have no anti-Semitic convictions myself and shall always be prepared to greet my Jewish brothers in arms as comrades. I do not, however, consider them fitted for the duty of training troops. They have a type of mind which is quite foreign to us and with which we are in many ways bound to be out of sympathy.

A highly-respected Jew, who was very anxious to be a good German, once complained to me that even the best members of his race would always be judged in the light of their numerous undesirable fellow-countrymen. No one will deny the tragedy that runs through the history of the Jewish race, but according to their own view, expressed long ago by a Jewish high priest, it is better that one man should suffer than that the whole race should be wronged.

The circumstances of the downfall of the German Empire are more likely to increase the antipathy against the Jews than to diminish it. Their influence in our country is far greater than their numbers or their value to the state warrant.

I will not go into the question of their international connections and the willingness they often show to identify themselves with the country that chance has made their fatherland. There are Jews

who are anxious to be true Germans and even Prussians. On the other hand, I have been told a story about the daughter of Cohn, the member of the Reichstag, according to which she is said to have written in an essay on the Fatherland : " I have no Fatherland." Whether this story is true or not I cannot say, but this I do know : that her father and his associates have done the German Fatherland grievous harm, and are continuing to do so.

The Jews and their friends prefer to set down the aversion that is felt towards them in many quarters as being based on religious differences, with a view to making it seem all the more inexcusable. This is misleading. The Jew of the old faith, on the contrary, enjoys the fullest respect among religious Christians, and they have both the Old Testament in common. It cannot, then, be on religion that the antipathy to the Jews is based ; long ago this feeling was the result of superstition, but never of religion. What keep Jew and Christian apart are race-characteristics. The dislike of the foreign element in the Jews is indeed often overcome in Christians by the love of money, and there are numbers of examples of marriages between rich Jewesses and Christians, even members of the nobility and officers. Cases where poor Jewesses are married by such men for their outward or inward charms do, perhaps, occur in novels, but one never comes across them in real life.

The German and Austrian Jews cannot be classed together, for one reason, because of the difference in numbers. German Jews are hardly likely to find their way into Galicia and Hungary, whereas there is a constant stream of immigrants to Germany, and especially Berlin, from these countries. This increase in their numbers is not always regarded with favour by the Jews already settled in Germany. After Poland was established as a kingdom and when there was a prospect of Lithuania becoming part of the German Empire, I heard a Jew express anxiety lest the result should be a strong influx of Jews to Germany and Berlin: "They will eat us up; if they come I shall turn Christian," were his concluding words.

A Hungarian Jew once told me that he and his compatriots regarded themselves in the first place as Magyars and not Jews. I am not in a position to judge whether this is true. Be this as it may, it is certainly true that Austrian officers who were Jewish in appearance preferred to be known as Hungarians. I have personal knowledge of the number of Jews in the Austrian army and must rely on the judgment of the Austrian leaders. According to this estimate the Jewish element must have exerted considerable influence on the general demeanour of the Austrian army.

The Austro-Hungarian officer was generally an attractive and capable person. This opinion, however, does not alter the fact that he was easy-going

and frivolous. This sort of thing can be understood in the case of young officers, but with the Austrians it was by no means confined to young men. These characteristics, with all their consequences, were common even among men of mature age and holding positions of responsibility.

There is some foundation for the saying that the East begins at Vienna. The well-known characteristics of the East—bribery and corruption—are far from being unknown there. They pervade the whole of Austrian life up to the highest positions. Malicious tongues did not even hesitate to maintain that the Emperor Charles himself was not immune to the temptations of foreign gold.

Any one who has had to conduct business negotiations with Austrian agents will know what awkward, slippery customers they are. They have the capacity that comes so natural to the Oriental for smooth-tongued bargaining and reducing their demands in such a way as to make it appear that they are doing it out of their own kindness of heart. In this respect they are surpassed by the Magyars, who are just like spoilt children. So long as they are allowed to have their own way they are well-behaved and amiable. If it is impossible, even with the best intentions in the world, to give them what they want, they at once become unruly.

It was a favourite trick in Vienna to cry, "We can't go on!" as soon as they wanted something

which they could only obtain by bringing special pressure to bear on Germany. In spite of our own urgent needs, what have we not been forced to supply them with in this way! In spite of all we did, however, the Austrian Press did not cease to attack us and to make it appear as though, instead of denying ourselves to keep them supplied, we were actually drawing on them. When at last the strike broke out that was so vociferously welcomed by our Social Democrats, even the newspapers of our own country accused the Government of supporting the strike or even of actually causing it, and this was done simply with a view to putting pressure on Germany.

I have on more than one occasion urged on the Government the necessity of showing greater firmness in dealing with Austria. I once received the following reply: "The strength of Austria's position with regard to us lies in her weakness." This was unfortunately the case with all our allies. We were afraid of their deserting us. This anxiety was not without foundation since the accession to the throne of the Emperor Charles, who was ruled by the Empress. He was a weak prince and finally it was concluded that he was not to be taken seriously. He had been the subject of a great deal of flattery on his succession to the throne; the high dignitaries of the Church of Rome had proclaimed him as the true apostolic Emperor. The old friction between the

evangelical King of Prussia and the Roman Catholic Emperor once more sprang into life in the background. Negotiations with the enemy went on widely in Vienna. The Emperor even went so far as to refer in public speeches to Hindenburg and Ludendorff as swine. Even in Vienna the Austrian Emperor was laughed at in the open street. Although he was ready to make any sacrifice so long as he might be allowed to remain Emperor, he shared with the Empress an ardent desire to see his head adorned with the crown of Poland. From an ally like this we could not expect much.

Among the Austrian Ministers I formed a slight acquaintance with Czernin and Baron Burian. The Minister for War, von Stoeger-Steiner, I got to know more intimately. The latter was a cultured, honourable man of irreproachable character, with whom it was a pleasure to be associated. He was, however, quite powerless to remedy weaknesses of the army ; it was too late.

Baron Burian gave one the impression of being a straightforward, almost blunt man. What lay below the surface I have had very little opportunity of judging. Among our representatives in Austria he had the reputation of being obstinate and pig-headed.

Czernin was said to be a clever and finished diplomat. It is probable that he had more in him than the rest of the Austrian diplomatists, but on

this point I am not in a position to form a judgment.

The negotiations of these two diplomatists which are best known to me had to do with the Polish question. The Emperor Charles had represented to our Emperor that in order to ensure the ascendancy of the German element in Vienna the Poles would have to be got rid of and bound down by the union of Galicia with the crown of Poland. I have my suspicions that this plan originated in his own brain; it always struck me as a move towards getting the crown of Poland into the hands of the Emperor of Austria. It is possible that the anxiety as to whether Austria would be able to keep her hold on Galicia for any length of time after the restoration of the Kingdom of Poland may have had something to do with it. As soon as Poland began to show signs of inclining towards Germany, Vienna seemed to be inclined to back out. It was proposed that the crown of Poland should be given to an Austrian Archduke under the supervision of Germany. Just as everything had been arranged in accordance with this plan the Archduke refused to accept the position at the order of the Emperor. The whole intrigue is as clear as day.

To begin with, our Emperor was inclined to fall in with the proposals of the Emperor Charles. When, however, Austria put difficulty after difficulty in the way of their being put into practice, and Poland seemed inclined to throw in her lot with

Germany, he refused to have anything more to do with them. He was not blind to the danger to Germany that would result from her being hemmed in by a great Polish power with an Austrian as its overlord. In Austria the plan continued to be firmly supported. Even after Germany had refused to be a party to it Baron Burian stubbornly continued to urge it.

After the dismissal of Czernin he made one more attempt to urge upon Germany his views about the Polish question. His agent came to see me, as he did not know how to set about it. Czernin's suggestion amounted to a compromise which was hardly likely to be successful. His opinion was that we should lose the war through the fault of Austria, because the Emperor Charles had made up his mind that peace must be made at all costs in the autumn (1918). To him the one hope of safety seemed to lie in strengthening the German element in Austria by getting rid of the Poles. Germany was to take from Poland what was necessary to her, and the rest he proposed to join with Galicia and put the whole under a governor to be appointed by Germany. The final details of the scheme were not to be settled until after the conclusion of peace, and when Germany was in possession of guarantees that Austria's policy would run along lines that were parallel with her own. He, Czernin, would consider a break with Germany on the part of Austria a very underhand

piece of work that would have the most disastrous results in his own country. He was anxious to make known his views also to the Emperor Charles.

Another authority from the entourage of the Emperor Charles confirmed Czernin's statement that the Austrian Emperor had made up his mind to conclude peace whatever might happen. He maintained that negotiations were constantly being carried on between Austria and the Entente, and that enemy money was flowing freely into Austria. It is significant that his suggestion for saving the situation was that Germany should buy the allegiance of Austria by a still larger bribe. Czernin, he thought, was finished with ; he did not think that the Emperor wanted to have anything more to do with him.

The enthusiasm for the German Empire with which Hungary was once inspired soon changed to hatred. She quickly forgot the part that Germany had played in freeing her from the menace of Russia and Rumania. Her vanity even tried to belittle the part played by Germany, to the glorification of the bravery of the Hungarian troops. In spite of the fact that Hungary had at one time declared herself ready to supply grain and cattle to Germany, which she had refused to do for Austria, it now became more and more difficult to carry on negotiations with her. Her agreements were not carried out and were continually being qualified with new demands.

This was followed by abuse of Germany in the Press, as was the case in Austria, and no energetic steps were taken on our part to deal with the slanders. From Rumania and the Ukraine supplies of corn were to be delivered to Austria-Hungary, which was to have preference over Germany to begin with, a stipulation having been made that the supplies for Germany should be equalised later. This compact was never fulfilled. They even had the audacity to hold up our supplies as they were passing through Hungary and make use of them themselves. Things went from bad to worse until they ended in open enmity, and the Austrians made no further attempt to conceal their disloyalty to their allies. They have reaped their reward, and sooner than any one could have expected.

What the exact position is with regard to the Austrian-Germans has not yet been properly cleared up. After the formation of the German Empire, their regret at having to remain outside the new Empire has been voiced in prose and verse. To-day, now that the Empire has broken up, they may be the last to become members of it. As is the case with ourselves, they will have a great deal to give up and unlearn. In lack of unity and internal dissension they were unfortunately on a par with us. If they were to throw in their lot with us it would mean a great access of strength to the Catholic population in Germany, which would bring with it a change in

the domestic situation. Eternal Rome would have a hand in the game and would do her best to turn the general upheaval to her own advantage. Old connections with South Germany still exist. The growing influence of this part of the Empire would perhaps be strengthened.

Whatever new states may rise out of the ruins of the Austrian Empire it is certain that they will not be friendly to us. In this I agree with Kühlmann that it is essential for us in some way or other to come to an understanding with Russia as soon as the internal condition of that country makes it at all possible. That will become especially important for our future in the event of the establishment of a state of Great Poland. The statesmen of South Germany showed themselves devoid of any understanding of the Polish danger; they had had no first-hand experience of it. To-day, perhaps, subsequent events may have taught them better. It was a bad sign that Germany showed that she was not able to put a stop to Polish ambitions in her own territory.

It would be unjust not to admit that many Austrian officers proved themselves good and loyal comrades and that they regret as much as we do the disastrous outcome of the war. Also, large numbers of the Austrian troops conducted themselves with great bravery under all circumstances. But the Austrian army, like the effete Austrian Empire, was

made up of too many different and discordant elements. In any advances on our part towards the parts of the monarchy whose interests coincide with our own, the policy adopted must be prompted by clear-headed judgment and not feelings of sentiment. If the Austrian-Germans join hands with us the choice of ways for our foreign policy will be simplified.

The Bulgarians also proved themselves a very awkward people to deal with. They wanted everything and would give nothing in return, and thought that they were within their rights. Whether they were given guarantees in this direction I have never yet been able to make out. They were in a position to show themselves very important allies so long as they maintained their strength and loyalty. It was therefore necessary to offer full support to this country, which in itself was poor. Bribery and self-interest played their part. Those in power looked after their own interests, as is the custom in the East, and is not unknown even in democratic countries. In Sofia I heard a story of a Minister who is reported to have said: "X. has made so many millions: that is indecent. All the same, I shouldn't mind having a million or two myself." It goes without saying that the purchasing officers and officials took money from the contractors. The principal contractors were Germans, but Austria tried to get a hold on the market, from time to time,

by means of supplies with which she had been provided by us.

The Bulgarian President, Radoslawow, and the Minister for War, Neidenoff, were friendly to Germany. The men who succeeded them played a doubtful *rôle*. Officers in the Bulgarian army told us quite openly that President Malinow and Lukow, the Commander-in-Chief, had both accepted money from the Entente and had done their best to spread Bolshevism in the Bulgarian army. Bulgarian newspapers also were permitted to publish statements to the effect that we were sucking the country dry and were not fulfilling our obligations, without any serious steps being taken to interfere. The operations in the Dobrudja provided ample material for agitation against Germany. The intercourse with our troops led to a good deal of friction. Our Commander-in-Chief, General Scholtz, in a speech, put the truth pretty plainly before the Bulgarians. This did not, however, do much good. In their capacity of Orientals they had quite a different point of view from our own ; they were an immature people who had never properly grown up, and with this they combined the selfishness and cunning of the peasant.

They often came to us with demands for equipment and clothing. We had reason to be suspicious that they were not using all the stuff we were sending them for the purposes of the war, but were storing it up for use in peace. As a matter of fact,

their men at the front were from time to time very badly provided for. The men were going about without trousers and without boots, as we brought to the notice of their Ambassador and of the King himself. In the end I took the matter into my own hands and sent the consignments not to the Bulgarian but to the German authorities. This change, however, was very badly received. If we had had the same financial resources at our back as the Entente had, we could have afforded to give with a freer hand.

At the beginning the Bulgarian troops fought well; many remained good soldiers to the last. But they no longer wanted to attack; all they wanted to do was to hold their ground. The pick of the Bulgarian divisions were surrendered by Malinow as prisoners so that he could keep his hand free. Had it not been for this his rule would soon have come to an end, even after the retreat.

Many of the Bulgarian leaders and other officers remained on very good terms with us to the end and proved themselves good comrades. But they have never been able to understand why we were unable to send them reinforcements in the final struggle. At the beginning we had no troops that could be spared, and later when they became available and were sent to the rescue it was too late. A disloyal Bulgarian division had already surrendered their position and enabled the enemy to effect a breakthrough.

Bulgaria, too, has been taught a sharp lesson. Insatiable in her demands at first, she has had to give up stretches of territory that she had come to regard as permanent possessions. Her hopes of predominating power in the Balkans have ended in nothing. Serbia and Rumania will continue to be awkward neighbours, and there will be no peace in the Balkans. In spite of this there may be a future before Bulgaria. There is room within her own borders for expansion and her peasant population is vigorous and simple, though in need of culture and education. Many people who are in a good position to judge, maintain that the Serbians are a better and more capable people ; on this point I am not able to give an opinion.

I have had opportunities of becoming acquainted with the King, who has abdicated. In the negotiations in which I have had to do with him he gave me an impression which bears out his reputation of being a capable and well-informed prince. In these negotiations he was assisted by the Crown Prince, whom he is said to have employed as his private secretary. If this is the case it was a very good way of training an heir to the throne for the duties that he would later be called upon to undertake. In spite of his youthfulness the Crown Prince gave one the impression of being an intelligent and clever man. The Bulgarians regarded him as one of themselves, which was not the case with the King. One day

when the King made a flight in an aeroplane no one took any notice of him. When the Crown Prince did the same thing there was a general outcry of horror that the future king of the Bulgarians should expose himself to such risk. For one thing, the Crown Prince was a skilled athlete, in addition to being a clever and daring motor-driver.

In spite of many difficulties I have always found the Bulgarians pleasant to deal with. Combined with their keen business ability a certain *naïveté* was noticeable. They were not so sensitive and ready to take offence as were the Austrians, but they sought to make an impression by means of continually lodging complaints. With the Minister for War, Neidenoff, I have always found it a pleasure to do business. He was a quiet, kindly man, of whom I cherish very pleasant memories.

The Turks, being true Orientals, were by no means easy to deal with. Their placidity and utter indifference to the importance of time made negotiations with them very tiresome. They always, however, preserved a very dignified bearing, and their manners were perfect. Here, too, we could expect no return for the supplies and material with which we had to furnish them. It is scarcely necessary to mention that the country was a hot-bed of corruption, where every man set his own interests first. Here, too, highly-placed personages were accused of accepting bribes from the Entente.

Preference for our enemies was apparent in many quarters, although every one preserved, at any rate, the appearance of friendship towards us. It was only very rarely that a highly-placed officer or Government official so far forgot himself as to let open enmity appear on the surface. In these cases charges were brought against the offenders, and after prolonged and delayed proceedings formal satisfaction was attained.

Our officers were in a difficult position with regard to Turkish officers of senior rank, who were for the most part younger men than themselves, and also with regard to the other officers. To support them in their rights required the constant intervention of the German Military Mission. It was hardly to be expected that men of such widely different points of view should understand one another.

It is, of course, possible that our choice of officers who were to be sent to Turkey was not always as happy as might have been the case. The competition for these appointments was extraordinarily keen. Every officer sent to Turkey ought really to have gone through a special course of instruction to give him some knowledge of the ways of the East. If this is not done there is sure to be friction caused, not by intention, but by ignorance.

The Turk is a good soldier when he is properly paid and fed. Those Turkish troops who fought in Rumania side by side with our own bore themselves

excellently. In spite of this, however, half of them deserted and ran home when they were taken back to Syria. This can be understood ; they had to pass through their home country, which they had not seen for many a long day, and with which they had had no means of communication. Another reason for their behaviour was that the Turkish administration had resumed control of their pay and supplies. Part of them returned to their regiments when their visit to their homes was over, the rest loafed about at home or wandered about the country.

The Arabs, including their officers, were unreliable and cowardly. Their countrymen were hostile and the enemies of the Turks.

Nevertheless, the Turkish army rendered valuable service in defence. In Gallipoli the troops had been through a period of great want, without supplies, artillery or ammunition. In spite of everything, however, they managed to hold their ground. Their leader, General Liman von Sanders, had been Chief of the German Military Mission and thoroughly understood the Turk, whom he kept well in hand. They were more afraid of him than they were of the enemy.

I have seen the positions of both sides at Gallipoli. The enemy enterprise could only have hoped to succeed if it had met with no resistance. The Turks had suffered so severely from hunger, and endured such hardships, that after the enemy had

evacuated his positions many of them literally gorged themselves to death on the supplies which were left behind.

The primary reason for the failure of the operations in Palestine was the quite inadequate communications. An excellent relief force was sent out from Germany and did splendid work, but they were left in the lurch by the Turks when making their most vital attacks. It would have been wiser to have sent only leaders who were well versed in the abnormal conditions under which the campaign was to be fought. Liman von Sanders was sent out too late. In the East, however, it is very difficult to settle questions of personnel as there are so many things to be taken into account. One of the most important considerations is jealousy ; even our own men have not been altogether free from this.

What was lacking was a central control capable of taking the whole situation in hand. This need should have been supplied by the Military Mission. There were, however, too many posts outside the scope of the Mission's authority. Even the regimental officers were more directly responsible to their Turkish chiefs than to the Mission.

In the administration the conditions were very bad indeed. The workers in the departmental offices were not paid and were starving. In face of these facts the strongest forces that we could send were of no avail. It seems a pity that the troops

who lived so simply and had so few needs should have been ruined by defective administration.

We had to equip the Turks as we were doing in the case of the Bulgarians. Often enough the men sold their new clothing as soon as they received it. A particular difficulty was the want of coin, and this gave us a great deal of trouble while producing little result. Paper money stood at a low value and was often refused, especially by the Arabs. At the same time there were said to be large stores of gold in the country. The only way, however, in which the Government could get hold of it was by using force and even cruelty. Then we were turned to for help. I most emphatically urged that no gold should be given to the Turks, but that it should be kept by the German officials under lock and key. Circumstances, however, proved too strong for me.

The most important men for us were Enver and Taalat. Without these two strong men Turkey would not have been able to hold out as long as she did; they were unreservedly pro-German and could be relied on, but they had many enemies. Enver took up a lofty point of view; he insisted on continuing to suffer defeats in his own theatre of war when strong reinforcements on our front in the West could have brought about a decision.

Any one who has ever been connected with the Turks, otherwise than in business or military affairs, will have pleasant memories of them. It is obvious

from their manners and behaviour that they belong to an ancient civilisation, though now it is out of date and crumbling to pieces. The appearance of Constantinople itself reminds one of this fact. Seen on a bright, sunny day the town makes a charming picture ; but a closer examination brings into evidence the scenes of ruin and desolation. The Young Turks have not effected any substantial improvement, the only change that has come about under their rule being that property has changed hands, which is, in principle, what many of our disturbing spirits are trying to bring about with us. Before any real renascence of Turkey could come about the whole nature of the people would have to be radically altered. This can only be done by many years of careful and efficient education. I have seen in Constantinople a strikingly large number of schools filled with countless numbers of boys and girls. Is it possible that in this way a new foundation is being laid ? I do not think so. In its present form Mohammedanism no longer appears to possess its old power of awakening life in the people, but seems to have become an obstacle in the way of a new civilisation.

All our allies proved to be weak and unable to provide for themselves. We were obliged to keep them provided with what they needed, in spite of the fact that we were cut off from the markets of the world. From fear that they might desert us we

treated them with far too much consideration. The Entente held together with a firm hand all the separate nations that composed it and kept them united in pursuit of the common end; we, on the other hand, did not succeed in attaining this unity. Each state had its own ends to serve and its own domestic difficulties. In the end came, also, breach of faith and treachery, which we had sought to prevent by indulgence. Germany has not shown herself capable of imposing her will from the first and so making the position clear. An Austrian once wrote me a letter which concluded with the following words: "Two things are necessary to a ruler: intelligence and force. We have been found wanting in both these things. With you there has been no lack of intelligence but you needed the strong fist of Bismarck."

It would be better to maintain silence on the subject of our faithless former allies, Italy and Rumania, were it not that they must serve as a warning. With Rumania I have never come into contact personally; Italy I only know through our military negotiations. We have never trusted her beyond a certain point and have only made her a party to our information as far as was absolutely necessary.

After 1866 Bismarck wrote a letter to Moltke in which he warned him against placing too much faith in Italy, and pointed out that King Victor

Emmanuel I. and his Commander-in-Chief, La Marmora, had during the war of 1866 supplied France with important information about our side. That was during the war in which we were fighting side by side against a common foe. The faithlessness of Italy is therefore of long standing.

His successor, Victor Emmanuel II., once revealed the fact that France was in possession of minute information about the details of our mutual agreements, as had been reported to him by his representatives in France. Count Schlieffen, with whom I had to confer on this matter, said with a smile: "He gave them the information himself." In view of all this, therefore, we did not admit Italy into our confidence. It will be understood, then, that the defection of Italy was not received with any great surprise. A state like this is no use as an ally and will always be regarded with suspicion.

There were, however, some Italians who were very distressed at the disloyalty of their country. One member of the Italian Embassy, when the time arrived for his departure from Berlin, came to take his leave, and with tears in his eyes, said: "I have always been a respectable fellow; don't think any the less of me because of the attitude of my Government!" The Chief of the General Staff, Polkio, also had the reputation among those who knew him of being loyal and reliable. His sudden end before Italy deserted us leads one to suspect that he did

not die a natural death, but was got rid of by his enemies.

For the champions of a well-ordered world it is difficult to account for the way in which these states who were untrue to their pledged word seem to have secured the prizes of the war. But similar cases are of every-day occurrence in life. A dishonourable man is not prevented from amassing great possessions and living in enjoyment of them, while honest and industrious people suffer want. It is no use worrying our heads to explain why this should be so. Ernst Moritz Arndt calls to us : " That which is over and done with throw calmly into the broad lap of eternal necessity and look to the younger generation—educate them, train them and guide them so that they may turn out men." We shall have need of men, for our future depends on them. The disappointments that we have suffered from our allies should be a warning to us and teach us to pay heed to the words of the Great Elector : " Allies are good, but our own strength is better ! "

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION

ONE of the effects of the world-war has been to take us Germans into foreign lands and among strange nations which, otherwise, the great majority would never have seen. There seemed good cause for anxiety lest in addition to widening their outlook they should also learn some of the practices and vices which are characteristic of these nations. In many instances this has actually been the case.

In Russia and Poland they saw the comforts that the fruits of corruption can bring. In Bulgaria and Turkey they had opportunities of observing the way in which those in high places enriched themselves at the expense of the state, and private soldiers followed their example on a small scale by selling their equipment, the property of the state. These things were not without their effect on our men. But we did the foreign nations an injustice. The war has shown that the same evil tendencies and habits were latent in our people, too, and only required more favourable conditions to bring them out. Unjust stewards of property entrusted to their care, war profiteers with their ill-gotten gains, traitors, thieves, and finally

outlaws and murderers, sprang up among us in a way that was nothing short of terrifying. We had no need to take lessons from the French in immorality, certainly not in gluttony, to say nothing of the large number of greater and lesser offences for which the innumerable laws and regulations that govern commerce and trade give an opportunity.

I once heard a story of a child who asked his mother : " It is true, mother, isn't it, that after the war we shall go back to the ten commandments ? " A terrible indictment from the mouth of innocence !

The new Government is seeking to replace religion by morality. In order to bring this about the moralists will have to borrow from religion ; they will find no other foundation on which to build. But morality can be twisted to suit each man's own will if it has no other standard than that fixed by men themselves, or even if it is established and upheld by the power of the Government.

Once in the train I heard a conversation between a civilian and a field-grey. The latter made use of the word " morality," whereupon he was interrupted by the other man as follows : " Morality consists in not being found out."

Of course there have been, and still are, people who act morally and live moral lives without the help of religion. They are unintentionally fulfilling the demands of religion and are conscious of a moral responsibility. Among the mass of the people the

idea of responsibility will always be absent from their conception of morality so long as there is no corresponding penal code. If, however, there exists no loftier conception of responsibility than this, the words of the railway passenger I have just mentioned will be the code of the majority.

I do not believe that the conscience of the people, which during the war has been allowed to run wild, will be set in order by means of moral teaching alone. On the contrary, it is my firm conviction that this appalling disaster, the extent of which is not yet by any means fully realised, has been visited upon us by God that we may be led back to remembrance of Him and cease to leave Him out of account in all our actions.

In the midst of the turmoil and upheaval of November, 1918, there stepped out of the Berlin train at Dierschau station, among other passengers, young girls who were decked out in red scarves and ribbons. One of them was addressed by a splendid specimen of a soldier in the following words: "You too are wearing the red ribbon?" The girl answered with a laugh: "But it is very pretty!" She was thinking only of the outward attraction of the thing, while the soldier went down to the inner meaning of which the ribbon was the visible emblem, and added in a tone of enthusiasm: "Yes, it is splendid!" Poor fellow, I thought; how soon the splendour will pass away and the dream vanish! Since then there

has been a succession of plunder, murder and assassination. But still the dream continues ; people are feasting and dancing as though there was not a care in the world. After the time of carnival follows, as a rule, Ash Wednesday.

The speeches in Weimar could do nothing to change all this. At the same time, from some of their speeches it was easy to understand what the position of our Fatherland is at the present moment and what it will be in the future. That to all the pangs that the nation has endured should be added disloyalty does not seem in the least disturbing to the majority. We still go on living in the present and leaving the morrow to take care of itself, until our enemies wonder how a nation in the situation in which we find ourselves can be so callous. But the wolf is at the door. Penury, hunger and bankruptcy are menacing us from a dangerously short distance and are preparing the ground for a fresh outbreak of lawlessness and rebellion.

The worst is still to come. Let us not give up all hope that the strength of the German people, now lying dormant under the outer covering of rubbish and decay, will yet rouse itself and prove equal to the direst needs of the future.

What will happen then ? After the wars of liberty the Prussians found themselves united and of one purpose. High and low, noble and commoner, came to regard each other as brothers in tribulation

under the foreign yoke that had been thrown off, and as brothers-in-arms in the struggle for the liberty of the Fatherland. Will history repeat itself? We do not want characterless equality which has never been, and never will be, genuine. Democracy aims at abolishing all differences, but it does not succeed. In democratic states there exist differences in social standing that are far more unpleasant than anything that is to be found among ourselves. An income of a few more hundred francs is enough in these countries to raise a man above his less wealthy fellows. The unfortunate omnipotence of money makes equality an impossibility.

Socialism claims to be a remedy for these evils, but Socialism will not succeed in making good its claims. A clergyman whom I used to know, but who is long since dead, is supposed to have prophesied that Germany would be overthrown in the year 1919 and then the millenium would begin. In just the same way Socialism dreams of paradisal conditions which are to rise from the ashes of the German Empire. It forgets that it has to deal with human nature.

One of the new men, I think it was Scheidemann, has said that one section of the working-classes has not shown itself worthy of the revolution. He will have experiences which will alter his views about men and had already had plenty of opportunities for this in Berlin, Halle and other places.

That Socialism is not possible from an economic point of view is easy to work out. The cleverer men among the Socialists have already realised this fact and regard the future with an anxious eye.

Now a condition of things in which every one is content with a minimum, and the hunt for gold and property is abandoned, can be conceived, even though culture would come off rather badly. But for such conditions to be possible they would have to be accepted, not only by a single nation, but by the whole world. If the experiment were tried by one nation alone in the midst of others in which the old order continued, that nation would of necessity go bankrupt, and that before very long. Can it seriously be believed that America and England would be parties to such a movement ? They are much more likely to take advantage of the so-called League of Nations to further their aim of getting into their own hands the economic mastery of the world.

Even among themselves there are not many supporters of Social Democracy to be found who are disposed to be contented with their lot, but there are among men in leading positions many members of that very race in which the bump of acquisitiveness is most strongly developed. These are not the paths that lead to content and happiness.

Just as once the Prussians stood shoulder to shoulder in war and in tribulation, so it behoves the Germans to do to-day. We had become estranged

from one another and knew one another no more. A celebrated sculptor who, though advanced in years, joined the army as a volunteer and rose to be an officer, once said to me of his men during the war : " What splendid men they are ! I didn't know they were like that before." He had lived in Berlin among men of his own class and the rest had remained strangers to him. Even among the private soldiers it was the same thing. If on the one side the fault lay in false reserve and arrogance, envy and suspicion were on the other, and neither knew or understood the other. Out there in the trenches the most widely different types of men were brought into intimate contact ; they learned to know and respect one another. I had hoped that something of this would be carried over into peace. The tragic end of the war seems to have interrupted all development in this direction, and now the distinctions and opposition are greater than ever. It is essential that a change should be wrought in this direction if we are to be restored to health as a nation. It is the duty of every man who loves his country to do his part towards effecting this change. Each must allow his neighbour what is due to him, and must respect the manhood that lies in him, so long as he does not behave in such a way as to prove himself unworthy of respect.

Luther has said that all honest work is worship of God. This lesson should be taken to heart and work

esteemed accordingly, whether it be high or low. But this esteem of work must be kept within reasonable limits and not pushed to a ridiculous extreme as has been the case with the wages of the mill-hands in Berlin.

When I call for mutual respect between one citizen and another I have no intention of excluding the men of the army. I know very well that in the old days there was plenty of room for improvement in many sides of army life, but I do not think that the improvement lies in the direction of substituting, as is now being done, equality and independence for obedience and discipline. In this direction lies the ruin of an army. But at the same time, men must be treated with human consideration. An officer should never allow himself to be guilty of insulting or ill-treating his men. Naturally all soldiers are not models of virtue, as is seen on all sides at the present time; many of them are incapable of responding to reasonable treatment. It is therefore necessary that severe punishment can be fallen back upon if it is called for. It must not be imagined, however, that a radical change is to be brought about by merely issuing an order. Grievances may be the result of tradition, or sometimes it is the case that they only come to be felt as grievances in the course of time. It is often necessary to go very far back to get to the root of the matter, and they are aggravated by custom and repetition.

The non-commissioned officer who stands in closest association with the men is bred in these traditions. He hands on and metes out to others the same treatment as he himself received. An officer ought to be capable of keeping himself in hand, but he does not always do so by any means. It is certainly difficult to preserve one's patience in face of stupidity, indifference and defiance. It would be a good thing if many of those who are wont to criticise would ask themselves whether they always come up to the standard they demand from others within their own spheres of influence. This, however, should not be brought forward by an officer as an excuse. Young officers follow the example set by their seniors ; it is therefore the duty of every senior officer to set a good example to others in his treatment of the men who have been placed in his charge.

The critics never make any mention of the ill-treatment and bullying that go on among the soldiers in the ranks themselves. There was no harm, for instance, in the tradition which existed among the mounted troops of the old army, according to which the older men would not allow a recruit to groom his horse with his cap on his head, or when the older men claimed for themselves the exclusive use of certain inns which the recruits were not permitted to enter. There were, it is true, cases of ill-treatment when the recruits encroached on these privileges of

their seniors. Worse went on in the barracks. These recruits were beaten by the older men in bed at night or forced to get up in their night-shirts and then thrashed. There was even a certain unpleasant name for this sort of thing which, however, the men did not take very seriously. It is certain, too, that many other things used to go on in these places which did not come to the notice of the officers. Woe betide the unhappy man who was bold enough to lodge a complaint! He would have been the victim of a terrible revenge. Such evils and abuses are not to be suddenly abolished, in spite of the strictest supervision and regulations, for it is easy to transfer them to other places where they are outside the range of authority. The only way in which they can be stopped is by a long and strict course of training, and even this remedy will not always produce the desired result owing to the fact that the personnel is constantly being changed.

The struggle to obtain humane treatment for the soldiers did not always spring from motives of pure philanthropy. As a rule older men recalled their period of military service with pleasure, so they cannot have had such a bad time when they were in the army. Naturally insubordinate men, however, did not look at things in the same light. Their quarrel was directed against the irksome discipline which to many was a thorn in the flesh and stood in the way of their plans, as has now been made quite

clear. A short time ago Will Vesper brought out a pamphlet in which he makes an attempt to account for the feeling of hatred for their officers by the men which has been brought to light by the Revolution. He claims to have found the cause in the constant looking out for the signs of rank, the military salute, the standing to attention ; in short, in the necessity for always showing respect for superiors. It is obvious that he has little understanding of the nature of discipline, for he was, I hear, called up for the first time when he was no longer a young man and had no eye for anything beyond the personal discomforts of the army. Whether he ever had an opportunity during the war of learning the true necessity for strict discipline I do not know. Hermann Winter came to understand, as is shown by his poem in Simplissimus, which contains the following lines :

"Not one of the great words is greater than this;
Not God, nor King nor Fatherland.
Like an age-old rock in the wild turmoil of the waves towers
Discipline.
She stands unshaken. Her face is radiant with the light of
knowledge of good and evil.
Veiled in grey silence, her eyes fixed
Until they smart, she fulfils her destiny."

Discipline is not compatible with individual freedom. Discipline demands constant training and practice until it becomes a habit. It would have been much better for Germany if her discipline had continued to stand like an age-old rock in the waves and not been undermined and overthrown by

systematic agitation. The value of discipline cannot be judged by its discomforts and by the fact that it must be maintained from time to time in the respectful treatment of unworthy officers.

When this subject is touched on there nearly always arises a wide-spread outcry against the procedure of the court-martial. It may be defective; a good many unsuccessful attempts would have to be made before it could be arranged in such a way as to fit in with everybody's wishes. It would be a simple matter if one only had to deal with men of strong, firm character and real manliness.

I have known a case where an appeal against the decision of a court-martial was even brought before the Emperor himself and he confirmed the judgment. This is not likely to occur often. It very rarely happened that the judgment of a court-martial was quashed, for this involved dismissal from the service. But any one who has had anything to do with court-martials has unfortunately only too good reason to know that little reliance can be placed on the statements of witnesses.

When I was in command of a regiment I had on probation a non-commissioned officer who was not known to me. One day I saw a gunner who had a wound on his head; when I asked him how it had happened he told me that this same non-commissioned officer had thrown a stool at him as he was going into the room. The N.C.O. maintained that

the stool had been standing on the top of a cupboard near the door and had fallen down when the door was opened. Every man who had been in the room at the time either supported the statement of the N.C.O. or said they had seen nothing. It was therefore impossible to have him punished. As, however, the man had made a favourable impression upon me I immediately had the N.C.O. reduced. This is the difficulty with which one is continually faced unless one happens to have been a witness of the offence complained of. I have recently heard a proposal put forward that all accusations should first be examined by a confidential commission before being brought before the officers concerned. Such commissions may prove a means of avoiding friction ; they will never produce successful results. An officer who knows his men and keeps his eyes open will give a juster decision than a commission of several.

There was in Germany a universal outcry against militarism without any clear conception of what was meant by the word. The organisation of our army has been copied by the majority of foreign armies. In France discipline in the field was much more strictly enforced than was the case in our army, and there was no sparing of the death-penalty. Even in Switzerland, the home of liberty, I have seen a staff-officer, and not a regular officer at that, strike a man behind the ear. I must admit, too, in contrast to this, that I have also seen in the same country a

drunken soldier smash his water-bottle on his rifle in the presence of an officer and shout: "It doesn't matter, it's only state property," and the officer only laughed at him. It is in the nature of the German to admire things in foreign countries of which he complains at home. The new order of things will do nothing to change this, but it will experience the same criticism which it has been so ready to offer in the past, and, indeed, the criticism will be more richly deserved than was the case under the administration of the old Government.

At the present moment criticism is busying itself with the peace conditions that have been imposed by our enemies, and indeed there is full justification for criticism. Instead, however, of uniting and rising in protest against these extravagant and shameful demands, we are dissipating our energies in abusing one another. We are, and remain, a people with no idea of politics, and this fact becomes more evident every day. Talk is going on in Weimar as once it did in Frankfort. At Frankfort there were certainly more wise heads assembled together than there are to-day in Weimar, but nevertheless they were, and remained, children in politics.

Scheidemann has made reference to the great minds that have made Weimar sacred. It is true that every German will look back on these with pride and reverence. But their greatness did not lie in their political importance; nor can it be imagined

that a place imbues with the greatness of its own memories every casual visitor to its shrines.

The new Government throws all the blame upon the old. That is very convenient, but it is also a proof that the new Government is afraid that it, too, will one day be called upon to give an account of its stewardship. One of its members has made the statement that the armistice was agreed to by Prince Max's Government. That is right as to the letter but false as to the spirit. When the armistice was agreed to the power of the Emperor had already been torn away from him by General Headquarters, because they could no longer rely on the army to continue their resistance. When, however, the shameful peace conditions became known, and meanwhile the front seemed to have become firmer, General Headquarters, counting on a universal rising of the people, wanted to go on resisting. But the democratic Government insisted on an unconditional surrender. At this juncture the mutinous sailors stabbed the army in the back, and ruin was allowed to run its course. Those who share the responsibility for this act may well prefer to have it hushed up, but nevertheless it is the truth. Who was it who opposed the adoption of more drastic measures to deal with the mutiny of the sailors? Who are they who have never ceased their efforts to ruin the discipline of the army and to sap its strength? Who has opposed in the Reichstag every one of

the Government's measures by which it was hoped to put a stop to the intrigues which were eating at the heart of the army ? In addition to all this our Social Democrats have thought it no shame to say outright that a complete victory for Germany would not please them. This is pretty overwhelming evidence !

Instead of looking for the root of the evil where it really exists, Scheidemann accuses General Ludendorff of being a gambler. In making a statement of this kind he is merely revealing the fact that he knows nothing about the principles of war and nothing about the character of General Ludendorff. Before every enterprise that he undertook Ludendorff carefully balanced his objectives and the means he had at his disposal, and only acted when he felt that he could do so with a clear conscience. Up to the time of the successes in the summer of 1918 he had a right to believe in victory. He had also every good reason for continuing the offensive until the Americans got the better of us. I do not dare to-day to give judgment on the succession of disasters which then began, for I have no sufficiently intimate knowledge of the attendant circumstances. But Herr Scheidemann will be no better off. War is always a matter of insecurity and uncertainty. The only constant factor is the determination and will-power of the Commander-in-Chief. No one can deny that Ludendorff was well equipped in both these respects.

It is certainly time that people stopped running down men who have only done their duty. The blame for the loss of the war cannot be laid at the door of any one man; it must be divided among many, and indeed must rest in the end with the whole people.

A short time ago a clergyman wrote me a letter in which he claimed that our downfall was a punishment for our sins. This may possibly be true, but we can also lay a pretty extensive budget of sin at the door of our enemies, and this is by no means lessened by their peace conditions, which are themselves nothing less than wicked. In spite of this, however, they triumph.

They show themselves to be the most shameless hypocrites when, for example, they try to make General Liman von Sanders responsible for the Armenian atrocities and profess to regard these with horror, while all the time they as civilised and Christian peoples treat us with greater cruelty than even the Armenians were treated. Even Italy and Rumania come out of the war unpunished.

The theory of this good clergyman does not, then, solve the riddle. Johannes Scheer conjectured that Germany would be called upon in the nineteenth or twentieth century to play a similar *rôle* to that she assumed in the sixteenth, when she helped the world to win spiritual freedom. She would get as little thanks for it as she did then, but only

oppression and tribulation, and the "to be or not to be" of our nation would come more seriously into question than was the case in the Thirty Years War.

I, too, am firmly of the conviction that God is pursuing a definite purpose with regard to our nation. He has not been mentioned much in Weimar for He is not taken into account by our rulers. Only Herr Gröber of the Christian National party, or, I should say, the Centre, has made an attempt to quiet the conscience of his Catholic colleagues by calling on Him to come to the help of the new Government by reference to the words of the Apostle Paul: "For there is no authority without God; where there is authority it is from God." Good! But he must admit that the same applies to the old authority. Now St. Paul goes on to say: "Whoever sets himself against authority sets himself against God." Who are they who set themselves against the authority of the old Government and even went so far as to overthrow it? No, Herr Gröber, that is not enough to salve our consciences. It only serves to show that the Centre party can play on all the strings and knows how to adapt itself to every situation. It only requires that the new Government should be overthrown and replaced by the Spartacists or the Bolshevists for these to be recognised as the authority desired of God. It is better not to touch on this matter, especially as with few exceptions every one has

placed his services at the disposal of the new Government in order to help in infusing new life into our stricken Fatherland. This is not the time for listening to more or less brilliant speeches; it is the time for action.

One is forced to admit one's sympathy with the Minister of State for War, Herr Noske. He is acting, and he is acting rightly. But it is interesting to notice that his actions follow the lines of the old Government in the days before its work was hampered by the men who are now ruling the country. These men wanted to save bloodshed by protecting the revolutionaries, and in doing so made the revolution a permanency, and instead of saving bloodshed they caused it to be poured out on all sides.

It seemed a strange thing that the revolutionaries, who recoiled before no crime, should be treated as equal adversaries until Noske struck out a new and right line. There will be no return to order and peace until these enemies are regarded as what they really are: traitors to the German nation. The worst criminals are not those who rush to their weapons in a fit of madness and fanaticism, but their moral leaders who help themselves at a safe distance from the danger and fighting and are respected and treated as politicians of equal standing with the others. There is surely nothing to surpass the easy-going innocence of the German people! Or is it possible that the real explanation is fear?

We do not know how the fate of our people will work out. Our enemies are treating us in a way I could have imagined possible with savage, uncultured peoples but not with civilised nations. Imagine Germany in their position! It is unthinkable that she would have acted in the same way or anything like it. In spite of it all, however, our enthusiasts for international peace and the League of Nations do not yet seem to have learned their lesson, although the neutrals have already begun to grow suspicious. The German remains unteachable. Wilhelm Baabe seems, unfortunately, to be right when he uttered the grimly prophetic words: "German people? What are you talking about? A German-speaking or German-chattering concoction of tribes who were mixed together for a moment by a few great men and shaped into the semblance of a state! To-morrow, perhaps, these men will be dead, and the compound will dissolve again into its different elements and then from all sides the foreign nations can come boldly with their spoons to restore and set up again the ancient freedom of the German nation!"

The Germans will never establish order, and will certainly never attain to greatness except under the compulsion of a carefully-considered and clear-sighted power which will set them in the right path and lead them and compel these foolish, obstinate people to unite. So far this has only been accomplished

by the monarchy and the great personalities who placed themselves at the monarchy's service. In her imagination Germany has yearned for the immortal Emperor, and for centuries the Germans have talked and sung of him. In reality they have rejected him when he had hardly been granted to them. Is it possible that this longing of the generations has proved an error ? I do not think so. The German Emperor will come back, when everything is bankrupt, to begin once more the laborious task of rebuilding his empire. It may be that the interruption of her development and culture may be the means of securing for Germany a longer life and influence in the world, if only her people show themselves capable of taking a hold on life. If, however, it is decreed that this shall be our end it would have been better to have gone under fighting in the welter of the world-war, as our ancestors believed and expected of us. For it is a worthless nation that will not gladly put her all to the touch for honour's sake.

THE END

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